

REGIONAL REVIEW: APRIL 2024

STOCK NOTES

Class 375: The internal refresh of all class 375 units has been completed. The work included provision of power and USB sockets and installation of LED lighting.

Class 458: Further moves to and from Widnes Alstom have been:

26 March: 458501 from Bournemouth (but held at Eastleigh until 29 March)

16 April: 458421 to Bournemouth, 458513 from Bournemouth

Various test trips have operated from Bournemouth Depot to Basingstoke and back, including by 458422+458415 on 9 April.

Class 701: Further moves, in addition to test trips, have been:

4 April: 701014 Eastleigh to Marchwood, 701019 Marchwood to Eastleigh

9 April: 701022 Marchwood to Eastleigh

11 April: 701058 Derby to Eastleigh

16 April: 701004 Eastleigh to Marchwood

17 April: 701016 Eastleigh to Marchwood

18 April: 701029 Marchwood to Wimbledon Park

19 April: 701530 Eastleigh to Bicester MoD

23 April: 701503+701504 Derby to Worksop

TIMETABLES and DIAGRAMS

Class 387 units are to be used on services between Brighton and Southampton from June.

Southern via Eastleigh: Southern services currently scheduled via Eastleigh, for route knowledge purposes, are 04:35 Mon-Sat empty stock Littlehampton to Southampton and 09:26 Mon-Fri, 11:26 Mon-Fri and 14:26 Saturdays Southampton to Brighton. From the June timetable change there will just be the 04:35 empties plus the 23:23 Mon-Fri Southampton to Littlehampton.

Island Line: The service between Ryde and Shanklin reverted to hourly from 8 April, following the Easter holiday period.

CrossCountry: In an effort to relieve overcrowding on Summer Saturdays, CrossCountry trains will not stop at Basingstoke and will call at Winchester only to set down southbound and pick up northbound. This is to limit use of the trains by passengers making local journeys.

GB Railfreight has started a return trip from Southampton Western Docks to Hams Hall Distribution Park, east of Birmingham. Trains are scheduled Monday to Friday, departing Southampton at 05:24 and arriving back at 21:13.

INTERESTING WORKINGS

Class 73: Caledonian Sleeper 73970 returned from Eastleigh Works to Doncaster via Oxford on 28 March.

Class 158: Unit 158881 returned from sanding tests at High Marnham on 20 March, running via Worksop, Hertford North, Upper Holloway and Kensington to Clapham Yard.

Hastings Diesels: Unit 1001 ran an excursion on 6 April from Hastings to Exeter Central via Herne Hill, Kensington Olympia and Newbury, returning via Salisbury, Eastleigh (reverse), Waterloo and Herne Hill. The unit was chartered for a tour on 20 April from Tonbridge to Victoria, Aylesbury Vale Parkway and London Underground's Ruislip Depot. It remains in seven-coach formation 60116, 60119, 60529, 70262, 69337, 60528, 60118, but with no passengers in 60116. Although the unit carries number 1001, the DEMU vehicles mostly come from unit 1013.

On 9 April inspection saloon 975025 *Caroline*, the former Hastings DEMU buffet car 60755 (unit 1031), was worked by 37418 empty from Cricklewood to Victoria platform 2 for a tour at 08:10 to Tonbridge. It ran via Stewarts Lane, Clapham Junction, Streatham South Junction, Wimbledon, Sutton, Norwood Junction, Caterham, Purley, Redhill, Brighton, Eastbourne, Hastings and Battle. The saloon was leading from Victoria. Tonbridge was reached at 14:54 and the train stabled in the Engineer's Sidings. The tour continued next morning from Tonbridge at 09:01 via Dover Priory, Canterbury East, Sole Street and Catford to Victoria, arriving at 12:44. The saloon returned empty to its base at Derby during the afternoon.

Class 455: Blue and grey unit 455868 was working on the Reading line with 455906 on 20 to 23 April, though only between Waterloo and Bracknell on 21st, because of engineering work.

Class 769: Following their nocturnal trips to Barassie in March, units 769922 and 769959 (ex 319422 and 319459) were undertaking more extensive tests from Kilmarnock during the week commencing 22 April. They mostly shuttled between Elderslie and Kilwinning, but returned to Kilmarnock via Glasgow Central. That involved five miles at gradients between 1 in 100 and 1 in 67 on diesel power.

Excursions: On 29 March 67005 worked an Eastleigh to Aviemore excursion as far as Carlisle via Chandlers Ford and Westbury. It returned the train from Tyne Yard on 1 April. A trip on 11 April from Stafford to Windsor, out via Kew East and return via Kensington, was topped and tailed by 47828 and 47712.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

ASLEF: All drivers at Southeastern and Govia Thameslink Railway, together with many at South Western Railway, were on strike on 8 April. CrossCountry was among the companies with a drivers' strike on 5 April as was Great Western on 6 April. In addition, drivers were not working non-contractual overtime from 4 to 6 April or on 9 April.

Southeastern advertised a full service on all days except 8 April. That day the only trains were:

- Charing Cross to Orpington
- Charing Cross to Dartford via Sidcup
- Charing Cross to Dartford via Bexleyheath
- St Pancras to Ashford International

Southern and Thameslink ran a reduced service on 4, 5 and 9 April. Gatwick Express was replaced by Southern trains, calling additionally at Clapham Junction and East Croydon. The only Southern service on 8 April was a non-stop shuttle between Victoria and Gatwick Airport. Thameslink did not operate south of St Pancras.

South Western Railway ran a reduced service on 4 to 6 and 9 April, with many half-hourly services reduced to hourly. The only trains on 8 April were:

- Waterloo to Feltham via Richmond
- Waterloo to Woking stopping
- Waterloo to Guildford via Woking
- Waterloo to Basingstoke
- Basingstoke to Salisbury

Except for the Gatwick service, trains on 8 April did not operate early in the morning or during the evening.

There were no CrossCountry trains on 5 April and a reduced service on overtime ban days. The only Great Western trains from Reading on 6 April were to Basingstoke and Oxford. A normal service was advertised on other days, with the proviso that there may be short notice alterations and cancellations.

ASLEF has called further strikes at companies including Southeastern, Govia Thameslink Railway and South Western Railway on 7 May and CrossCountry and Great Western on 8 May. Services similar to those described above can be 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.

P13	3 to 31 March	MAA to 31 March
All TOCs	70.4%	67.6%
SWR	71.1% (10 th)	67.4% (12 th)
GTR	70.0% (12 th)	68.8% (10 th)
SE	70.8% (11 th)	67.7% (11 th)

Tuesday 26 March: A power failure on the up line at Sole Street caused the 07:15 from Gillingham and the 06:18 from Ramsgate to become stranded. Fortunately, the 07:15 was at Sole Street station, but passengers on the 06:18 had to be evacuated to a train on the down line. Some trains were diverted via Dartford, but many were cancelled. Power was restored early in the afternoon, but the service remained disrupted through the evening peak. Units 707030+707024 failed near Queenstown Road while working the 13:42 Waterloo to Shepperton. After some delay the train was able to continue at reduced speed to Clapham Junction, where it terminated 38 minutes late. Following trains were diverted to the fast line.

Wednesday 27 March: A track circuit failure at Weymouth about 07:30 resulted in only platform 3 being in use for the rest of the day. Alternate SWR trains terminated and started at Dorchester South, but GWR was able to operate as normal. 66792 failed in Sevenoaks Tunnel about 13:50 while hauling a Ferme Park to Tonbridge West Yard freight train. 73212 was sent to assist and the train reached Tonbridge 160 minutes late. Following trains already south of Chislehurst were able to reach Tonbridge via the up line, using the bi-directional signalling from Sevenoaks, but with delays to services in both directions. Later trains were diverted via Maidstone East, if via Ashford, or via Redhill, if for the Hastings line. Most trains terminating and starting at Tunbridge Wells were cancelled, but, most commendably, all others ran, albeit with delays. A freight train from Purfleet to Tonbridge West Yard later in the afternoon was held for almost 2½ hours on the fast loop from Bickley Junction to Petts Wood Junction, out of the way of passenger services. With trains and staff displaced, services were subject to delay for the rest of the day. A man suffered serious wounds when stabbed on the 15:36 Orpington to Victoria. The train terminated at Beckenham Junction, where police and the ambulance service attended. Up trains were diverted via Catford until 17:00, but did not stop at Beckenham Junction for a further two hours. Southern services terminated and started at Birkbeck. A man was arrested next day and charged with attempted murder.

Thursday 28 March: The 04:50 and 05:24 from Seaford to Brighton were diverted via Wivelsfield, because of a tree on the line between Lewes and Brighton. The 05:54 terminated at Lewes, as did the 05:35 from Eastbourne, but the line was clear in time for the 06:24 from Seaford to run normally. Loss of power at Portsmouth Harbour prevented the 14:29 to Brighton and subsequent trains departing. Trains terminated at Fratton or Southsea until current could be restored. Services resumed with the 16:15 to Waterloo, but consequential cancellations and delays continued for two hours. High winds resulted in the 17:29 Gatwick Airport to Reading hitting a tree near Dorking West and the 18:09 Waterloo to Guildford doing so between Bookham and Effingham Junction. There were also trees on the line during the evening between Aldershot and Ash Vale and at Camberley. An advertising hoarding was blown onto the track at Kemsing.

Good Friday 29 March: A problem with a signalling cable about a kilometre long between New Milton and Sway caused delays and numerous cancellations from 08:30 until Sunday morning.

Saturday 30 March: The track subsided near Penshurst, so there were no trains between Edenbridge and Tonbridge. Until 1 April trains ran between Redhill and Edenbridge, with buses between Edenbridge and Tonbridge. From 2 April the trains were withdrawn, because reversal at Edenbridge requires someone to operate the ground switch panel. Buses operated between Redhill and Tonbridge. Passengers were permitted to travel between Tonbridge and Redhill via London Bridge at no extra cost. The line did not reopen until 15 April, after the formation had been reinforced with steel sheet piles and soil nails. The 14:44 from Alton failed at Weybridge where it terminated, blocking the up slow line for about half an hour. It did not help that Reading trains were being diverted via Chertsey and signalling problems between Waterloo and Vauxhall added to the disruption. A points failure at Woking put the up and down fast lines out of use through the station from early evening onwards. Fortunately, stopping trains from Waterloo could continue to use bay platform 3 between the fast lines. With all other trains having to use the slow lines there were delays of up to 20 minutes for the rest of the day.

Easter Monday 1 April: The 05:53 Cambridge to Brighton terminated at Gatwick Airport, because of a bad wheel flat.

Tuesday 2 April: A signalling failure at Eastleigh about 13:30 caused major disruption. Trains were delayed up to 1½ hours or cancelled. A few were diverted via Havant or Laverstock. A young herring gull, an endangered species, was rescued from the track at Brighton station, requiring power to be isolated on part of the layout for about 40 minutes in the early evening.

Wednesday 3 April: Basingstoke station was evacuated and all trains were stopped for about an hour from 09:00 after a suspicious package was found. There were numerous cancellations and extensive delays. The 08:40 Bournemouth to Manchester was diverted via Havant and Wokingham and the 09:05 and 09:35 Waterloo to Weymouth also ran via Havant. Disruption continued into the evening. The line was closed at Fratton for about an hour after a shopping trolley thrown onto the track became wedged under the 18:02 from Brighton.

Saturday 6 April: The up line was blocked by an overnight embankment slip between Hassocks and Burgess Hill. A limited service operated using the bidirectional signalling on the down line. Many trains were cancelled or cut back to Three Bridges or Haywards Heath. Some from Brighton were diverted via Lewes and Littlehampton trains ran via Crawley. The up line re-opened next day with a 20 mph speed restriction. There were no trains from Reigate all day. Not only were GWR drivers on strike, but a points failure prevented Southern trains turning back there.

Sunday 7 April: There were no trains to and from Hayes between 10:00 and 12:30, because of loss of power to the signalling. Services terminated at Clock House or Elmers End.

Tuesday 9 April: There were no trains on the Lymington branch until the 13:12 from Brockenhurst, because of flooding. A signalling problem at Hilsea caused delays and cancellations for much of the day and on Wednesday. As usual when there is disruption in the Portsmouth area some Southern services terminated short.

Wednesday 10 April: The 08:19 Sutton to St Albans was delayed by 40 minutes at Streatham, because of a problem with the doors, and terminated at Kentish Town. Reactionary delays and cancellations continued into the afternoon.

Thursday 11 April: An external power failure on Wednesday afternoon resulted in Arundel signal box relying on its emergency battery. That expired during the night, but power was not restored until after 06:00. Trains could not operate between Angmering, Pulborough and Ford, resulting in many cancellations throughout the morning. Just as the service had recovered, the power failed again for 1½ hours during the afternoon, with disruption continuing until late evening. Numerous track circuits at Haslemere failed during the middle of the day, resulting in trains being cancelled or diverted via Winchester. A problem with Cosham level crossing added to the disruption.

Friday 12 April: A signalling failure between New Cross and London Bridge on the line used by trains towards Charing Cross caused delays throughout the morning, with some services diverted to Cannon Street. A track circuit failure during the afternoon between London Bridge and Charing Cross caused further disruption, with more diversions to Cannon Street. Various passengers heading to Clapham Junction on London Overground ended up not where they expected to be. The train to form the 08:22 to Stratford failed in platform 1, blocking the line for over half an hour. The 08:38 and 08:52 arrivals from Stratford were diverted to platform 17, and the 09:09 arrival from Dalston Junction was diverted to Battersea Park, in order to free up platform 2. The train to form the 09:53 from Seaford failed there, blocking the line for about an hour. A points failure at Wimbledon put the down slow line out of use during the afternoon. Another points failure, at Otford, caused Thameslink services to and from Sevenoaks to be diverted via Orpington during the evening. There were delays to Maidstone East trains.

Saturday 13 April: Elephant & Castle station was closed until early afternoon while police investigated a serious assault. An overnight track circuit failure at Windmill Bridge Junction put numerous signals to danger and could not be rectified.

until mid-morning. Resulting delays and cancellations continued into the afternoon. The 13:42 and 14:12 to Shepperton terminated at Fulwell, because of a signalling failure at Hampton.

Sunday 14 April: A points failure resulted in afternoon trains from London Bridge via Tulse Hill being diverted via Forest Hill. The line was closed for three hours after the 16:36 Haslemere to Portsmouth Harbour was involved in a fatality at Rowlands Castle.

Monday 15 April: High winds resulted in trees falling onto the railway at Camberley, Brookwood, Weybridge, Greenwich, Charlton, Shoreham (Kent) and Strood.

Tuesday 16 April: A track circuit failure on the Chessington branch caused delays and cancellations for about six hours from 15:00.

Wednesday 17 April: The 05:00 Portsmouth to Waterloo via Winchester, units 450024+103, was delayed at Hilsea and terminated at Portchester, because of a fault on the train. The line was blocked until after 07:30. A conductor rail fault between Oxted and Woldingham resulted in both lines being blocked following passage of the 07:14 East Grinstead to Bedford. There were no trains between South Croydon and Oxted until early afternoon, while repairs were carried out. A few electric trains operated between East Grinstead and Hurst Green and there was a limited service between Uckfield and Oxted. There were no trains from Chessington South between the 09:04 and 12:04 departures because of a signal failure. Meantime, trains terminated at Raynes Park. A gas leak between Grateley and Salisbury caused the line to be closed from late afternoon until Thursday evening. Trains were cancelled or diverted via Southampton and there was a limited shuttle between Basingstoke and Andover on Thursday. Teynham level crossing failed about 17:00, causing significant delays and cancellations. The fault was corrected within an hour, but disruption continued until late evening.

Thursday 18 April: There were no trains between Clapham Junction and Dalston Junction for almost three hours from 14:00, because of a points failure at Old Kent Road Junction. Southern was able to run towards London Bridge, but down trains were diverted via Forest Hill. Beckenham Junction services were cancelled. A track circuit failure in Clayton Tunnel caused delays and cancellations throughout the evening.

Friday 19 April: A car was driven onto the line at East Farleigh level crossing late in the evening, fortunately after the last passenger train.

Saturday 20 April: Services between Clapham Junction and Surrey Quays were suspended for about two hours from 07:30 because of a points failure in the Clapham High Street area. A track circuit failure at Ramsgate about 10:00 caused delays and cancellations for the rest of the day. Most trains scheduled to use platforms 3 or 4 were diverted to 1 and 2. Some trains between St Pancras and Margate via Canterbury West terminated and started at Ramsgate and some others to and from Ramsgate via Herne Bay terminated and started at Margate.

Sunday 21 April: Dorking trains were terminating at Sutton, because of engineering work. Evening services were disrupted after the train shunting to work the 20:20 to Victoria failed. The 20:08 from Epsom Downs was delayed by two hours and most other services were cancelled for the rest of the evening.

AROUND THE REGION

Kent Route: Platform monitor screens for Driver Only Operation at Kent Route stations are being renewed over a period of about a year. Unlike classes 377 and 387, class 375 units do not have external cameras, so platform equipment remains necessary.

Kingsferry Bridge: Closures of Kingsferry Bridge, to allow replacement of the cables that support the deck, have been amended to accommodate pupils travelling to school for exams and a cycling event on 22 June. The revised closure dates, when there will be no trains on the Sheerness branch, are 22:00 Friday to 05:00 Monday, 7 to 10 June, 28 June to 7 July, 12 to 15 July and 19 to 28 July.

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