

## REGIONAL REVIEW: JULY 2024

### STOCK NOTES

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

2 July: 458426 to Bournemouth, 458510 from Bournemouth

16 July: 458408 to Bournemouth, 458509 from Bournemouth

SWR has said that the use of class 458/4 on suburban services is a temporary measure, pending the introduction of class 701 units. A second passenger diagram for a pair of units on Weybridge via Hounslow workings took effect on 22 July. Units noted as having worked in passenger service are 458413/15/20/21/22/27.

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

8 July: 701010 Derby to Wimbledon Park

11 July: 701046 Marchwood to Eastleigh

15 July: 701046 Eastleigh to Wimbledon

17 July: 701025 Long Marston to Eastleigh

701046 was meant to go direct to Wimbledon on 11 July, but was detained at Eastleigh because of a brake fault.

### TIMETABLES and DIAGRAMS

**Maidstone East Line:** Network Rail is experimenting with daytime track inspections between Maidstone East and Ashford. That is much easier than doing inspections at night under artificial light. With working on the track while lines are open now avoided as far as possible, the 08:25 Victoria to Ashford is diverted from Otford via Sevenoaks and Tonbridge Mondays to Fridays from 22 July until 9 August.

**Southeastern:** Planned changes from December 2024 include twelve additional peak hour roundabout services from Cannon Street to the Sidcup and Greenwich lines. Stopping trains between Victoria and Orpington will be increased to every 15 minutes off peak. Two evening trains from Charing Cross to Maidstone East will be extended to Ashford.

### INTERESTING WORKINGS

**Class 18:** Clayton Equipment Company has built 15 diesel/battery hybrid shunting locomotives, which have been designated class 18. 18015 was delivered to Eastleigh Yard by road on 18 July.

**Class 47:** On 15 July 47810 hauled Mark 3 carriage 11082 from Poole to Southall via Reading. The vehicle had been detached from an excursion to Weymouth on 15 June, because it is mounted on bogies with long swing links, which are not permitted on Southern third rail routes. It was scheduled to average 40 mph from Poole to Basingstoke, net of pathing stops.

**Class 73:** 73109 and 73119 topped and tailed an empty rake of container flats from Tonbridge to Bognor Regis on 17 July. The outward route was via Redhill, Horsham and Littlehampton and return via Hove and Redhill. This appears to have been a route refresher for rail head treatment and deicing workings.

**Class 50:** On 1 July 50007 and 50049 ran from Kidderminster to Eastleigh Works for repainting. They were joined by 50008 and 50021 which arrived from Knottingley on 4 July. 50008 and 50021 hauled the London Underground 4TC unit from Eastleigh to Alton, for the Mid Hants Railway, via Fareham and Guildford on 11 July. 50008 returned to Eastleigh with the 4TC on 15 July and ran light to Bristol via Didcot on 22 July

**Class 153:** Network Rail's infrastructure monitoring train 153376 is making quite frequent visits to Southern lines, even though the Sectional Appendix shows class 153 as not cleared to operate on any Kent or Sussex Route lines and on very few Wessex ones. It ran from Derby to Barnham on 8 July, via Kensington, Selhurst, Redhill, Brighton, Littlehampton and Bognor Regis. Next day it ran from Barnham to Tonbridge West Yard via Crawley, Redhill, London Bridge, Tulse Hill, Crystal Palace, Caterham, Selhurst, Tulse Hill, London Bridge, Tulse Hill, Selhurst, Tattenham Corner, Purley and Redhill. 10 July saw it run from Tonbridge West Yard to Eastleigh East Yard via Redhill, Brighton, Lewes, Brighton, Hove, Fareham, Havant, Woking, Havant, Woking and Winchester. On 18 and 19 July it was working from Eastleigh over various South Western lines.

**Class 201:** Unit 1001 worked an excursion from Hastings to Derby on 13 July, running via Herne Hill, Kew East and the Midland Main Line. The unit continues to run in seven-coach formation, with three motor coaches.

**Class 701:** Unit 701037 was used for an emergency services training exercise in Guildford carriage sidings on 11 July.

**Excursions:** 47712 and 57311 topped and tailed an excursion from Nantwich to Weymouth via Oxford and Basingstoke on 6 July.

## 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.

Southeastern's recent performance is of note, because it operates a complex network with many flat junctions. The moving annual average figures show all three operators performing at about the same level, but with South Western Railway slightly worse than the others. Services from Waterloo are normally expected to be better, particularly because of grade separation at many junctions. By way of contrast, the moving annual averages for other companies serving Southern Electric lines are London Overground 73.0%, Great Western 60.6% and CrossCountry 47.7%.

P3	26 May to 22 June	MAA to 22 June
All TOCs	69.7%	67.5%
SWR	69.4% (11 <sup>th</sup> )	66.8% (12 <sup>th</sup> )
GTR	69.3% (12 <sup>th</sup> )	68.3% (10 <sup>th</sup> )
SE	72.2% (8 <sup>th</sup> )	67.8% (11 <sup>th</sup> )

**Wednesday 26 June:** Morning peak services were disrupted by a fire next to the track at Charing Cross, which put platforms 1 to 3 out of use. Many trains terminated and started at London Bridge or were diverted to Cannon Street. A points failure resulted in there being no trains to or from Littlehampton between the 10:42 to Victoria and the 14:00 to Brighton. A West Coast Railways steam train from Victoria to Swanage, hauled by 5MT 44871, caused lineside fires at Winchfield and between Micheldever and Winchester. Services were suspended while the fire brigade dealt with these. A more serious fire at Hinton Admiral damaged power cables, resulting in no trains being able to run for most of the afternoon. The 11:05 Waterloo to Weymouth was stranded between Hinton Admiral and Christchurch and eventually terminated at Bournemouth at 17:30. The steam locomotive remained at Swanage and the train returned to Clapham Junction diesel-hauled. There were numerous cancellations and delays for the rest of the day. Following temporary repairs electric trains were able to run through the area in half power mode. It took a week to fully reinstate the cables. Services were severely disrupted by a track circuit failure at Faversham about 14:30. Many trains were cancelled and there were delays up to two hours. Disruption continued for the rest of the day and was aggravated by a passenger alighting from a stranded train and a signalling failure at Rainham during the evening.

**Friday 28 June:** The 05:46 from Dover Priory failed on approach to Victoria, preventing any trains arriving or departing on the Chatham side. Fortunately, it was soon found possible to drive the train from the rear cab, so it could be propelled into the station. Consequent delays and cancellations continued until 10:00. Units 455853+871, working the 14:39 from Reading, failed at Earley and the train terminated there. The line was blocked until 15:30.

**Sunday 30 June:** The 12:35 Waterloo to Weymouth was delayed by 2½ hours after hitting a bicycle on the line at Christchurch and terminated at Bournemouth. The service was severely disrupted for the rest of the day.

**Tuesday 2 July:** An track circuit failure between London Bridge and Blackfriars during the morning and again in the evening required Proceed on Sight Authority signalling for northbound Thameslink trains, with a few being diverted via Tulse Hill. The 08:58 Brighton to Bedford failed at Blackfriars Junction and terminated at Blackfriars 40 minutes late.

**Wednesday 3 July:** The line was closed for over three hours after the 11:21 Ore to Victoria was involved in a fatality at Pevensey Bay.

**Thursday 4 July:** A signalling problem put the up main fast line out of use between Vauxhall and Waterloo West Crossovers until midday. Some up main line trains were switched to the Windsor line at Queenstown Road and others diverted to the up main slow at Vauxhall. Some suburban services were cancelled in order to provide line capacity and some West of England trains terminated and started at Basingstoke. There were no trains between Lewes and Seaford until the 15:06 from Brighton, because of problem with a set of points. The 08:50 from Ryde Pier Head terminated at St Johns Road and the 08:51 from Shanklin was cancelled, because of a signal failure. Services resumed shortly before midday. The 19:19 Gravesend to Victoria terminated at Lewisham, with smoke and arcing from the shoe gear. After attention from fitters, the train was able to depart empty to Slade Green depot about 22:15.

**Friday 5 July:** A speed restriction over defective track at Norwood Junction resulted in Thameslink services to and from East Grinstead being cancelled, Uckfield trains starting and terminating at East Croydon and trains from Bedford to Three Bridges being diverted via Tulse Hill. The restriction was not lifted until 8 July. Services between Alton and Farnham were suspended from 06:00 until 09:50, because of a track defect. A Lawley Street to Southampton Maritime freight train hauled by 66591 failed approaching Basingstoke shortly after 07:00. Initially it was blocking the line from Reading, but by 08:00 had been able to move forward sufficiently to allow following trains to pass it using bidirectional signalling on the up line. An assisting locomotive came from Southampton and the train went forward 3½ hours late. The 07:40 from Ramsgate was delayed by 2½ hours after hitting a tree root on the line near Fawkham Junction. Following trains were cancelled or diverted via Dartford.

**Saturday 6 July:** The line was closed between Bournemouth and Branksome until 07:15, because of a displaced conductor rail. A tree fell onto the line between Charlton and Woolwich Dockyard shortly after 11:00. Trains were cancelled or diverted for almost two hours. The down lines at Winchfield were blocked by a fallen tree about 14:30, delaying trains for up to an hour.

**Monday 8 July:** A substation fire resulted in loss of power to the down sidings and bay platforms 6 to 8 at Orpington throughout the day. Many early morning trains were cancelled because rolling stock was unable to leave the sidings. Thereafter cancellations were commendably few, but there were some delays. Many suburban trains turned back in the little-used up bay, which involved crossing the fast lines on arrival and departure. Otherwise turn backs were in the slow lines platforms. Temporary power connections brought the sidings and platforms back into use next day, but repairing the substation will take some time. A signal failure at Redhill about 20:30 brought all services to a halt for over two hours. Trains between Gatwick Airport and East Croydon all ran via the Quarry Line and the others were cancelled.

**Tuesday 9 July:** The 04:36 Gillingham to Luton and 05:35 Cannon Street to Dartford were delayed by two hours after a tree fell onto the line between Greenwich and Maze Hill. Following trains were diverted or cancelled, resulting in there being no service via Woolwich, because of Blackheath Tunnel being closed for engineering work. Trains between Redhill and Reigate were cancelled or delayed during the early afternoon, because of a lineside fire. There were no trains through Lewes from 20:00, because of a power failure affecting the signalling.

**Wednesday 10 July:** The 05:55 from Weymouth was involved in a fatality between Dorchester and Moreton. The police are normally able to deal with such incidents within about two hours, but in this case the line did not reopen until early afternoon. Trains turned back at Wareham, with the first to Weymouth being the 10:35 from Waterloo, running late at 13:18. The 13:16 Victoria to Littlehampton terminated at Hassocks due to serious disorder on board. Several emergency door releases were activated and could not be reset. The train was able to depart empty to the depot after about an hour. Following services terminated short and the service was disrupted into the evening. The 14:46 Victoria to Littlehampton was diverted via Crawley.

**Friday 12 July:** A track defect put the down main slow line from Waterloo out of use all day, requiring suburban services to be diverted to the down main fast. Woking and Cobham trains ran non-stop from Waterloo to Surbiton and Shepperton services were diverted via Twickenham. A signalling problem at Norwood Junction resulted in Thameslink services terminating at Three Bridges being diverted via Tulse Hill and Selhurst during the evening.

**Sunday 14 July:** The 11:16 Guildford to Ascot terminated at Ash Vale, because of a points failure. There were no trains between Aldershot and Ascot until the 14:16 from Guildford.

**Monday 15 July:** A signalling failure at West Croydon disrupted the service until 14:00. Some London Overground trains were cancelled or diverted to Crystal Palace and some trains to Sutton were diverted via Mitcham Junction. The last train to Shepperton was the 20:12 from Waterloo. Later services terminated at Fulwell, because of flooding.

**Tuesday 16 July:** The 11:18 Bedford to Brighton terminated at Wivelsfield, because of a problem with the brakes. A signalling problem between Woking and Guildford caused trains to be diverted via Cobham during the afternoon.

**Friday 19 July:** Trains between Ascot and Aldershot were slightly delayed shortly after 18:00 while a large tortoise was removed from the line near Ascot.

**Sunday 21 July:** A signalling fault on the Quarry line resulted in up trains being diverted via Redhill until 10:30. Drivers of trains scheduled via the Quarry line are instructed to accept the Redhill route if signalled to run that way.

**Monday 22 July:** The 04:14 Gillingham to Tonbridge was delayed at Maidstone Barracks for 51 minutes and terminated at Paddock Wood, because of a power failure. The service was disrupted until 08:00. All lines through Surbiton were blocked for two hours after the 12:33 from Portsmouth Harbour was involved in a fatality. Some Alton trains were diverted via Ascot and there were also diversions via Chertsey, but many services were terminated short of destination or cancelled. Consequent disruption continued into the evening.

## RAIL BUSINESS

**Antisocial Behaviour:** Following a successful trial on the West Coastway route, Govia Thameslink Railway has initiated an Antisocial Behaviour Improvement Plan across its network. This includes provision of body-worn video cameras to front line staff and doubling the number of Travel Safe Officers. Other initiatives include educational programmes with schools and working with the police and prosecution authorities to remove offenders from the railway. The company provides support to staff who have been the subject to threats, abuse or assault. The West Coastway trial resulted in a 60% reduction in antisocial behaviour.

**Lost Property:** Southeastern has adopted a computerised system for recording lost property which makes it much easier to link items found with requests for help from passengers. This has resulted in the proportion of lost items being returned to their owners increasing from 12% to 21%, with the success rate still growing. The most common items finding their way to the lost property department at Cannon Street are bags, coats and phones. Unusual losses have included a trumpet, an accordion, three tents and an artificial leg.

## AROUND THE REGION

**Motspur Park:** The old timber station building has been demolished and a brick replacement is under construction. There is a new footbridge with lifts.

**Barnes Bridge:** The timbers that support the tracks on Barnes Bridge are being replaced by fibre-reinforced foamed urethane supports. That results in the Hounslow loop being closed on Sunday 28 July. The line between Barnes and Kew Bridge is closed from 29 July to 2 August, when trains run between Kew Bridge and Weybridge. The Chertsey loop has no through trains to or from Waterloo, even at peak times. While the line is closed the opportunity is being taken to replace conductor rails between Kew Bridge and Chiswick.

**Isle of Wight:** The entire line from Ryde Pier Head to Shanklin will be closed from 6 September for engineering work, including bridge repairs at Sandown, renovation of the footbridge at Brading and signalling work and track and bridge renewals at Ryde. Ryde Esplanade to Shanklin reopens on 7 October, but Ryde Pier Head remains closed until May 2025 to allow further renovation of the pier.

**CREDITS:** Colin Duff, John Goodrich, Stuart Hicks, Peter Watson