

REGIONAL REVIEW: SEPTEMBER 2024

STOCK NOTES

Class 455: A driving trailer from unit 455904 was seen on a northbound lorry at Hamilton services (M74) on 30 August. Withdrawal of the last class 507 and 508 trains by Merseyrail means that the ex-508 trailer coaches in class 455/7 units are the only remaining PEP-type vehicles remaining in franchised passenger service. There are also the two former class 508 driving vehicles, 64664 and 64707, owned by Angel Trains, which are used as match vehicles for EMU moves worked by GB Railfreight.

Class 458: Unit 458418 was delivered to Bournemouth on 28 August and 458511 departed for Widnes, with the usual overnight stop at Eastleigh. Unit 458534 was hauled from Wimbledon to Long Marston on 13 September. 458411 was delivered to Bournemouth on 24 September. Units noted in passenger service between Waterloo and Weybridge via Hounslow in September have included 458408/10/12/13/16/20/21/26-28.

Class 700: On 16 September unit 700106 was hauled from Three Bridges to Eastleigh Works via Redhill, Crystal Palace, Brixton, Hounslow and Chertsey. This is for electrical repairs to the unit.

Class 701: Further moves, in addition to driver training trips, have included:

29 August:	701034 Long Marston to Eastleigh
6 Sept:	701041 Long Marston to Wimbledon
10 Sept:	701006 Eastleigh to Derby
17 Sept:	701011 Bicester to Wimbledon

Class 707: Southeastern has all of the class 707 units, following transfer of 707024 and 707030 from the South Western Railway. They departed from Waterloo at 00:05 on 7 September to Gillingham Depot via Herne Hill, Orpington (reverse) and Lee Spur.

TIMETABLES AND DIAGRAMS

Westgate-on-Sea: An additional train from Faversham towards Ramsgate has operated Monday to Friday since 2 September, in order to suit students at a college in Westgate-on-Sea. This has been achieved by extending back the 16:07 Ramsgate to Charing Cross via Canterbury West to start at Faversham. The National Rail Conditions of Travel provide that tickets are valid on any direct train service between the station(s) shown on your Ticket. Tickets to Canterbury are valid at either station and an ordinary single from Faversham costs £6.90, so a bargain for a 43 miles ride to Canterbury West via Ramsgate!

Freight: Freightliner is reported to be taking over the gypsum traffic from Southampton Western Docks to Mountfield from GB Railfreight with effect from 30 September.

INTERESTING WORKINGS

Class 20: Locomotives 20901 and 20905 returned from Bletchley to Woking with the drain cleaning train on 27 August.

Class 73: On 28 August locomotives 73119 and 73128 topped and tailed a rake of wagons from Tonbridge and Redhill to Bognor Regis and back, out via Horsham and Littlehampton and return via Hove. This appears to have been another driver familiarisation trip for leaf clearance and deicing workings. A railtour from Nottingham to the Bluebell Railway on 21 September was headed by 66792 to Acton Lane, with 73119+73128 added there for the onward journey via Kensington and Selhurst. The same arrangements applied for the return trip, save for the train running via Crystal

Palace. A power supply failure on the East Grinstead branch late in the afternoon prevented Southern trains running, but the tour was able to depart on diesel power.

Class 201: Unit 1001 worked an excursion from Hastings to Gloucester and Cheltenham via Tonbridge, Reading and Stroud on 14 September.

Class 423 (4Vep): Unit 3417 was hauled from Strawberry Hill to East Grinstead by 37667 on 5 September, in order to participate in a Bluebell Railway Diesel Gala. The unit was returned to Strawberry Hill by 37667 on 10 September.

Class 455: Units 455742+455849 worked the 05:26 Waterloo to Reading and 07:09 return on 6 September. 455705+455868 were all day on the Reading line on 21 September, starting with the 08:55 from Waterloo and finishing on the 22:50 from Waterloo.

Excursions: On 47805 and 57311 topped and tailed an excursion from Bournemouth to Shrewsbury via Eastleigh, Romsey and Westbury on 4 September. The train worked empty from Crewe on 3 September for overnight stabling on the Swanage Railway, but ran to Southall following arrival back at Bournemouth.

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.

P5	21 July to 17 August	MAA to 17 August
All TOCs	67.8%	67.2%
SWR	70.8% (8 th)	66.6% (12 th)
GTR	69.9% (9 th)	68.0% (10 th)
SE	69.7% (10 th)	67.5% (11 th)

Tuesday 27 August: Track circuit failures at Victoria about 08:00 initially put platforms 13 to 19 out of use, though some became available later, with trains having to be talked past signals at danger. Line blockages were needed later in the morning for investigations and repairs. This resulted in numerous cancellations and delays, with some trains diverted to London Bridge. Normal working resumed in early in the afternoon, but there was some residual disruption.

Thursday 29 August: A points failure at Stoats Nest Junction (Coulsdon) put the down fast line out of use during the afternoon. Thameslink services were delayed during the evening after a passenger drove their mobility scooter off the platform edge at Farringdon. The Fire Brigade assisted with recovery of the scooter and the person concerned.

Friday 30 August: A signalling failure prevented trains running to or from Charing Cross for about an hour from 11:00. Services terminated at London Bridge or were diverted to Cannon Street or Victoria. Adding to the disruption, trains via Sidcup were diverted via Bexleyheath for almost two hours from 11:00, because of a points failure at Dartford Junction. A points failure at Southerham Junction about midday disrupted services to and from Eastbourne until the middle of the afternoon, with numerous cancellations and late running.

Saturday 31 August: There were no trains on the Windsor branch for the rest of the morning after the 05:53 to Waterloo was involved in a fatality at Datchet. Services resumed with the 11:03 from Waterloo, which departed 24 minutes late and ran non-stop to Staines. The 07:50 Waterloo to Reading terminated at Wokingham, because of a track defect at Earley. The line between Reading and Wokingham was closed for repairs until early afternoon.

Sunday 1 Sept: The 15:40 Cannon Street to Dartford terminated at Sidcup, because of a track defect. Following trains were diverted via Bexleyheath and normal service resumed with the 18:40 from Cannon Street.

Monday 2 Sept: The 07:17 Luton to Rainham was involved in a fatality between Gravesend and Hoo Junction and the line was closed. The 09:30 Rainham to Luton departed half an hour late and terminated at Strood, but it seems there was no Thameslink driver available to operate a shuttle between Strood and Rainham. Strood was served only by Medway Valley trains, until Thameslink resumed with the 10:17 from Luton, which departed Gravesend late at 12:31. A track circuit failure at St Mary Cray Junction during the evening peak prevented use of the reversible spur from Chislehurst, so the 17:11 and 18:11 Cannon Street to Ramsgate were diverted via New Beckenham and Beckenham

Junction. The 17:41 to Dover ran via Tonbridge and the 18:41 started from Victoria. A signalling failure at Otford caused delays throughout the evening, with some trains diverted via Orpington.

Wednesday 4 Sept: A burst main at Ebury Bridge Road overbridge, just outside Victoria station, caused water to flow down onto the railway from 07:00. Trains were cautioned, but it was soon established that only the Brighton slow lines were affected. Trains were diverted to the fast lines while the slow lines and the bridge were checked, with normal working from about 10:30. A problem with Mortlake level crossing caused trains to be delayed or diverted via Hounslow from 18:15.

Thursday 5 Sept: The trailing crossover immediately west of Brockenhurst station failed during the night, causing delays to early morning trains. Trains towards Bournemouth had to run via the down loop until the fault was rectified. The 12:28 Southampton Central to Portsmouth & Southsea hit a tree near Portchester, causing damage to the leading cab of unit 450085. The train was able to continue after a ¾ hour delay and terminated at Fratton. A tree fell onto the main line at Paddock Wood during the afternoon. Some trains between Charing Cross and Ashford were diverted via Maidstone East.

Friday 6 Sept: Unfortunately there were two fatalities in East Kent. A trespasser was electrocuted during the night between Dover and Shakespeare Tunnels. Trains were cancelled, terminated at Folkestone Central or diverted via Canterbury West until 11:00. A body was found on the line near Canterbury East about 09:00, causing the line to be closed for three hours. A track circuit failure at Hever resulted in most morning trains between Hurst Green and Uckfield being cancelled. The 07:25 Victoria to Ashford suffered a brake fault on departing Charing and had to be assisted forward by another unit sent from Ashford. Trains between Three Bridges and Horsham were delayed or cancelled from late afternoon, because of urgent track repairs. The 15:56 Bognor Regis to Victoria was diverted via Dorking, but no others were. The line was blocked for two hours from 18:00 when a tree fell onto the line near Motspur Park. Some Guildford via Epsom trains were diverted via Cobham.

Saturday 7 Sept: The first round trip on the Lymington branch ran as scheduled, but then a tree fell onto the line. Services resumed with the 09:42 from Brockenhurst. A points failure at Norwood Junction about 10:30 caused significant delays and cancellations for the rest of the morning, with consequential disruption into the afternoon. The 09:43 Bedford to Brighton was diverted via Streatham Common and terminated at Three Bridges half an hour late, but this appears to have been the only diversion. There were no Southern trains to or from Reigate after 14:15, because of a points failure. Services did not resume until late Sunday afternoon, but Great Western was unaffected.

Sunday 8 Sept: A points failure at Balham during the afternoon put the up slow and down fast lines out of use. The resulting congestion caused significant delays and trains between Victoria and London Bridge via Crystal Palace were cancelled.

Monday 9 Sept: The line was closed for about 2½ hours after the 08:43 from Hayes was involved in a fatality at Eden Park. Trains terminated at Clock House or Elmers End meantime. The 17:41 Cannon Street to Dover Priory was brought to a halt by a brake fault near Teynham. The train was able to continue an hour late and terminated at Faversham.

Tuesday 10 Sept: The slow lines at Petts Wood were closed during the morning peak, because of a track fault, causing significant congestion and delays. There were no trains for about two hours from 09:45 to allow repairs to be carried out, with trains diverted via Swanley and Bat & Ball or cancelled. The down Arun Valley line was blocked for most of the afternoon to allow repairs to a defective conductor rail. Trains were cancelled or diverted via Hove. Southeastern services had just about recovered from the line closure at Petts Wood when there was a track circuit failure on the up Kent fast line between New Cross and London Bridge. That resulted in significant delays during the evening peak.

Wednesday 11 Sept: Morning peak trains were delayed by cows on the line at Pevensey Bay.

Thursday 12 Sept: A points failure at Nunhead caused the 05:02 Orpington to Luton to return from Bellingham to Bromley South and then proceed via Herne Hill. Following up trains were diverted via Herne Hill until 08:00. Trains between Victoria and Lewisham were able to run in both directions, but all trains between Victoria and Shortlands ran via Herne Hill until the problem was resolved. A points failure at Redhill caused delays and cancellations during the early afternoon, with some trains diverted via the Quarry Line.

Friday 13 Sept: A points failure at Brockenhurst shortly before 06:30 blocked the up lines. The 05:55 from Poole was detained at New Milton for 1½ hours before the fault was rectified. Other trains were delayed or cancelled, with a subsequent signalling problem between Brockenhurst and Sway adding to the disruption. Normal working did not resume until the evening. Unit 450099 failed at Ash while working the 07:34 Farnham to Guildford, blocking the line for about 1½ hours. The 07:50 Southampton Central to Brighton was involved in a fatality at Durrington-on-Sea, resulting in the line being closed between West Worthing and Arundel Junction for the rest of the morning. Trains between Victoria and Littlehampton were diverted via Crawley.

Saturday 14 Sept: Empty stock moving from Victoria to Grosvenor Carriage Shed became gapped, blocking departure of the 00:40 to Gillingham. The stranded train was assisted into the shed by another unit, allowing the Gillingham train to depart at 02:15. Two squirrels boarded the 08.54 Reading to Gatwick Airport at Gomshall. They would not get off at Dorking Deepdene and the train terminated at Redhill, where brooms and peanuts were used in more determined efforts to remove them from the train. One still could not be caught or encouraged to alight and remained on the train back to Reading.

Sunday 15 Sept: Engineering work resulted in all trains to and from Waterloo running via the Windsor lines, so it was unfortunate that a points failure put the down Windsor line out of use at Queenstown Road from about 12:30 until 15:00. Down trains had to be diverted to the up Windsor line, which is reversible, with up trains running via the reversible line. This caused congestion and delays, with matters not helped by the 09:25 from Exeter failing at Clapham Junction and blocking the up Windsor slow line for almost an hour. The 14:30 Sutton to Luton terminated at Mitcham Junction, because of a points failure at Streatham South Junction. Following up trains were cancelled or diverted via West Croydon. Curiously, Southern trains resumed running via Mitcham Junction within an hour, but Thameslink continued via West Croydon until 18:00. Planned engineering work prevented use of the line via Tooting and St Helier.

Monday 16 Sept: A points failure at Petts Wood put the up fast line out of use during the evening.

Tuesday 17 Sept: An overnight fire at Brockley severely damaged signal cables, resulted in all lines being closed until 11:00. Many trains were cancelled, including Victoria to London Bridge, Brighton to Cambridge and Three Bridges to Bedford via Redhill. London Overground services terminated at New Cross Gate, Thameslink diverted via Tulse Hill and some Southern services were diverted to Victoria or via Tulse Hill. Uckfield trains terminated at East Croydon. A very few Thameslink trains operated via the fast lines from 11:00, but other diversions and cancellations continued to apply. The 07:52 from Surbiton terminated at Vauxhall, because of a problem with the doors. The 14:47 Waterloo to Chessington South failed between Clapham Junction and Earlsfield with a brake problem.

Wednesday 18 Sept: The 13:34 from Chessington South, became stranded at Wimbledon station, having lost shoe gear.

Thursday 19 Sept: A points failure at Waterloo about 08:30 put the main fast lines out of use between the station and the west crossings for the rest of the morning. Main line trains, in both directions, were routed via the up main relief line, causing some congestion and delays. A landslip between Barnehurst and Welling about 09:30 resulted in the up line being closed until 13:00. Trains to Charing Cross and Cannon Street were diverted via Woolwich Arsenal and those to Victoria ran via Sidcup. The 18:05 Victoria to Portsmouth Harbour was involved in a fatality at Thornton Heath. Many trains were cancelled or badly delayed, but a few were diverted via Crystal Palace until the slow lines were re-opened about 19:30. Normal working resumed shortly after 21:00.

Friday 20 Sept: A broken rail near Feltham resulted in the line being closed until 08:00. A few Reading trains were diverted via Chertsey. There were no morning peak trains on the Lymington branch, because of a suspected broken rail. The line was closed for about 2½ hours after the 08:35 Victoria to Portsmouth Harbour was involved in a fatality at Emsworth. Lines to East Grinstead and Alton were flooded during the middle of the day. East Croydon station was closed for about an hour during the evening peak, because of a police cordon around a suspicious object nearby.

Saturday 21 Sept: An electrical fire caused the 03:15 Bedford to Three Bridges to terminate at Horley. The train was able to proceed to Three Bridges Depot about 08:30. The 12:17 from Dorking was detained for over an hour between Hackbridge and Mitcham Junction, because of a trespasser on the line. Following trains were diverted via West Croydon. No Thameslink services were running, because of engineering work.

Sunday 22 Sept: The 07:08 Eastbourne to Brighton was diverted via Wivelsfield, because of a tree on the line.

Monday 23 Sept: Flooding at Wadhurst overnight caused the signalling to fail, resulting in serious disruption throughout the day. There was also flooding at Walton-on-Thames, Lower Sydenham and Hayes, following very heavy rain, but all lines were clear by 09:30. There was no access to Selhurst station until 08:30, because the street was flooded, so trains did not stop. A rat became caught in the shoe gear of the 06:09 Waterloo to Guildford at Clapham Junction, causing arcing and loss of power. The train was able to proceed empty to Wimbledon Depot after a fitter had removed the dead rat and isolated the damaged shoe gear. Unit 377404 failed as it approached Victoria as the 05:14 from Horsham, blocking access to and from platforms 16 to 19. Some trains had to be cancelled or diverted to London Bridge. After passengers had been evacuated from the failure, it was assisted into the station by an empty train shortly after 09:00. The line was closed for about two hours after the 09:20 St Pancras to Ramsgate struck a person at Herne Bay. Signalling between Micheldever and Winchester failed about 17:00, with numerous signals showing danger. This was not rectified until Tuesday afternoon. There were extensive delays and cancellations, with some trains were diverted via Havant (South Western Railway) or Laverstock (CrossCountry and freight).

RAIL BUSINESS

Contactless ticketing: In addition to the Southeastern and South Western Railway routes where contactless payment should have been possible from September, the system is also to be extended to lines to Dorking (via Epsom), Reigate and East Grinstead. Implementation is delayed because of cyberattack on Transport for London.

AROUND THE REGION

Wye: The disused signal box at Wye has been dismantled and is to be relocated to the Helston Railway.

Ore: The railway is to be closed between Hastings and Rye from 19 October to 3 November, principally to allow major repairs to Ore Tunnel. Other work includes track renewals, maintenance of culverts and repairs to Ore station footbridge and Briscoe Road overbridge (between Ore and Three Oaks). Rail replacement transport will be provided between Hastings and Ashford, with trains between Ashford and Rye 07:30 to 18:30.

Tonbridge: GB Railfreight's new locomotive maintenance depot at Tonbridge West Yard has been formally opened. Class 66, 69 and 73 locomotives will be maintained here by EMD, Wabtec and St Leonards Railway Engineering. Tonbridge is an important operating facility for GBRf and the new facility, which cost £2.5M, will avoid the need for locomotives to travel to Peterborough or Doncaster for maintenance.

South London Resignalling: It is planned that the delayed resignalling of the Peckham Rye, Tulse Hill and Crystal Palace areas will take place between 26 October and 1 November. Control will transfer to Three Bridges ROC with effect from 2 November and the central panel at Victoria ASC will close. Throughout this period, the following services will not run:

- Thameslink via Herne Hill, Wimbledon and Sutton
- London Bridge to and from Beckenham Junction and Streatham via Tulse Hill
- Streatham Hill to and from London Bridge and West Croydon via Crystal Palace
- Surrey Quays to and from Clapham Junction via Peckham Rye

In addition, there will be no London Overground trains between Sydenham and Crystal Palace from 26 to 29 October and no trains between Balham and Streatham Hill on 26 & 27 October. Additional trains will run between London Bridge and Sutton via Forest Hill on 28 October to 1 November. Rail replacement buses will operate only between London Bridge and Streatham Common via Tulse Hill, with train tickets valid on regular bus services on other routes.

Balcombe: Repairs are under way to Ouse Valley Viaduct. This is a Grade II listed structure, so in order to match the original materials, bricks have been made specially and stone has been imported from France. The viaduct was very extensively renovated by Railtrack between 1996 and 1999, but drone footage released by Network Railway shows damp patches and quite extensive vegetation on the structure. Perhaps better routine maintenance would have been a good idea?

Pulborough: The disused signal box at Pulborough is to be renovated and put to community use.

Marchwood: In a letter to a local councillor about a possible passenger train service for Marchwood and Hythe, the Department for Transport says that *Network Rail undertook a detailed assessment of the proposal to better understand the technical, operational, costs and economic benefits for the scheme. This assessment concluded that the capital cost, operational cost and constraints and the limited service level that could be reliably operated would not deliver value for money for the taxpayer. Consequently, the decision was taken not to progress the scheme.*

ERRATA: The Metropolitan electric locomotive moved from Eastleigh to West Ruislip on 6 August is No 12, not No 5 which is at the London Transport Museum, Covent Garden.

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