

REGIONAL REVIEW: OCTOBER 2024

STOCK NOTES

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

24 September: 458502 from Bournemouth

1 October: 458406 arrived at Bournemouth, 458503 from Bournemouth

23 October: 458402 arrived at Bournemouth, 458519 from Bournemouth

Having stabled overnight at Eastleigh as usual, the onward move of 458503 on 2 October got no further than Woking, because the locomotive failed. It continued to Widnes on 7 October. Units noted in passenger service by 17 October were 458401/08-10/12/13/15/16/20-22/24-28.

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

30 September: 701503+701504 Derby to Eastleigh

23 October: 701052 Long Marston to Wimbledon

TIMETABLES AND DIAGRAMS

Class 701: A Shepperton diagram was worked by class 701 from 30 September: 05:23, 08:00, 18:36, 20:41 & 22:41 from Shepperton and 06:45, 17:43, 19:42, 21:42 & 23:57 from Waterloo. 701039 was used on 30 September, but the 05:23 was cancelled and the unit ran empty from Strawberry Hill to Waterloo.

INTERESTING WORKINGS

2024 Tube Stock: The first delivery of Siemens 2024 tube stock, for the Piccadilly line, ran from Dollands Moor to Wembley during the early hours of 14 October. It was worked by 66718 and 66798 via Bat & Ball, Lewisham and Kensington. The train was manufactured in Vienna, but it is expected that most will be built in Goole. New class 555 trains for Tyne & Wear Metro continue to arrive via the Channel Tunnel.

Class 20: 20007+20205 worked light engine from Bristol Barton Hill to Eastleigh Depot on 3 October. They ran to Reading Depot on 12 October and returned with GWR Mk 3 TSO 12142 for attention at Eastleigh Works.

Class 455: On 6 October units 455738+455868 worked between Waterloo and Bracknell, where trains were terminating because of engineering work.

Class 700: Unit 700106 returned to Three Bridges on 18 October, following repairs at Eastleigh Works. It was hauled by 37407 via Chertsey, Hounslow, Herne Hill, Crystal Palace and Redhill.

Balcombe: There was an unusual event on 30 September, when a passenger train started from Balcombe. The 05:15 Bedford to Brighton was cancelled, but a train and spare crew were found at Three Bridges Depot in time to pick up the path at Balcombe at 07:16. Balcombe passengers must have been surprised to have such a wide choice of seats!

Excursions: 47805 and 47810 topped and tailed a Crewe to Portsmouth Harbour trip via Oxford and Winchester on 12 October and one from Hull to Windsor & Eton Riverside via Kew East on 17 October.

Freight: GB Railfreight's final Mountfield empties to Southampton Western Docks and return gypsum to Tonbridge (for Mountfield) was hauled by 66799 on 27 September. The same locomotive worked the train to Mountfield on Monday 30 September and returned with empties to Tonbridge. Freightliner's 66508 hauled JNA open wagons for the service

from York to Millbrook terminal overnight on 2/3 October. 66508 inaugurated Freightliner’s gypsum service from Southampton to Tonbridge on 3 October, but did not continue next day. The first full round trip was on 8 October, with 66508 from Tonbridge to Mountfield and then to Southampton. 66539 worked back to Tonbridge. The train operates as previously: 18:19 Southampton Western Docks to Tonbridge West Yard via Chertsey, Richmond and Catford (though on 3 October the train was diverted via Herne Hill, Crystal Palace and Redhill); 05:10 Tonbridge West Yard to Mountfield and 12:22 Mountfield to Southampton Western Docks via Hither Green, Richmond and Chertsey.

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.

P6	18 August to 14 September	MAA to 14 September
All TOCs	68.6%	67.1%
SWR	70.1% (10 th)	66.6% (12 th)
GTR	69.1% (12 th)	67.9% (10 th)
SE	69.5% (11 th)	67.6% (11 th)

Collisions in Possessions: The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) has issued two reports on collisions within a possession, but occurring on two very different railways. One was on HS1, near Strood, on 16 November 2023 and the other on Island Line, north of Brading, on 22 November 2023.

In the case of the HS1 collision, multi-purpose vehicles (MPV) were being attached to each end of a tamper, prior to returning to Singlewell Depot. This involved the MPVs being set back onto the tamper, with the MPV drivers being guided by radio by a machine controller. While the first MPV was being coupled to the tamper, the second MPV was in collision with the other end of the machine. That caused injuries to the driver who was coupling the first MPV. This happened because the hand-held radios used by the driver and machine controller on the second MPV had failed, so the driver did not hear the message that he should stop. Furthermore, the machine controller had no means to apply the brake. The driver did not brake until he heard shouting shortly before the collision.

On the Isle of Wight the night’s work included track repairs and other maintenance work north and south of Brading. In addition a road/rail vehicle (RRV) would be making its way from Ryde to Shanklin cutting back vegetation. At places where other staff were working the RRV would stop to allow them to clear the track, before proceeding. As the RRV approached the track repairs site north of Brading it lost adhesion on a 1 in 78 gradient and could not be stopped. Fortunately, the track repair workers saw it approaching in time to remove their tools and trolley from the line. However, they were not able to move the trolley far enough from the track and it was hit by the RRV, resulting in minor injuries to two people.

The RAIB is critical of both Network Rail High Speed and South Western Railway for their management of infrastructure work. Network Rail High Speed is recommended to review rules and procedures to ensure staff can undertake maintenance work safely. There had been a previous collision between a MPV and a rail grinder on HS1 on 15 August 2021. That had been followed up by a recommendation that a brake control should be fitted at the non-driving end of MPVs, but that had not been done. RAIB recommends that Network Rail High Speed reviews how safety recommendations are dealt with and that the design of track machines is checked to ensure they can be moved safely. Brake controls have been fitted at the non-driving ends of HS1 MPVs since the incident.

Infrastructure maintenance on the Isle of Wight is unusual in that it is managed by South Western Railway, not Network Rail. South Western Railway is recommended to review how it manages infrastructure work, including how non-compliances with procedures are detected. It was discovered during the investigation that some information held by South Western Railway concerning gradients on the line was incorrect and this is to be checked.

Tuesday 24 Sept: A points failure between London Bridge and North Kent East Junction prevented Thameslink trains from accessing the Greenwich line. Trains between Luton and Rainham were replaced by a shuttle between Dartford and Rainham. The 14:34 Gravesend to Charing Cross terminated at Northfleet with a brake problem. Locomotive 66761 failed at Peckham Rye about 15:00 which hauling a Dollands Moor to Daventry freight. A second locomotive was dispatched from Hoo Junction and the train was able to continue its journey about 20:00. Trains between Victoria and Gravesend were cancelled while the line was blocked and other trains were diverted via Herne Hill.

Wednesday 25 Sept: While working a Toton to Dollands Moor freight, locomotive 66181 failed when approaching Longhedge Junction about 13:15. An assisting locomotive was sent from Hither Green and took the train forward about 16:00. Meantime London Overground services from Dalston Junction terminated at Wandsworth Road or Battersea Park. Services between Ascot and Aldershot were suspended for about five hours after a tree fell onto the line between Bagshot and Camberley shortly before 15:30. Trains through Wool were cancelled or delayed for about three hours after a road vehicle destroyed one of the level crossing barriers about 16:30.

Thursday 26 Sept: A track circuit failure at Crayford Creek Junction prevented trains running towards Slade Green until 10:00. The only up trains via Woolwich before then were Cannon Street roundabout services via Bexleyheath and those starting from Slade Green Depot. Other up trains were diverted via Bexleyheath or Sidcup. The 14:52 Waterloo to Weybridge, with 458410 leading, hit a substantial tree between Egham and Virginia Water. Further trees came down at Virginia Water and between Ascot and Martins Heron. All were removed by 20:45.

Friday 27 Sept: An Acton Yard to Newhaven freight terminated at Three Bridges about 06:45 with a brake fault on one of the wagons. The train was moved cautiously south of the junction, allowing trains to run towards Horsham, but all trains towards Haywards Heath had to run via the down fast line from Tinsley Green. The 08:46 Victoria to Littlehampton was diverted via Crawley, but all others followed the normal route, despite the congestion and delays resulting from the down slow being blocked. It was not until 17:30 that the defective wagon could be recessed into a siding, allowing normal working to resume. The 10:20 Waterloo to Woking terminated at Wimbledon after a bird became caught in the shoe gear, causing a short circuit and power failure on the down slow line. Power was restored about midday. The 10:20 Ore to Victoria was diverted via Brighton, after a tree fell onto the up line between Lewes and Keymer Junction. Following trains up to and including the 12:33 from Eastbourne were similarly diverted, with some terminating at East Croydon. Only a few trains were able to run via Fareham following a track circuit failure about 12:30. Southern services were diverted to Portsmouth or cut back to Chichester or Barnham. Most trains between Waterloo and Portsmouth via Winchester were diverted via Petersfield. Trains that did run via Fareham were badly delayed. Normal service resumed about 20:00, but with residual delays. A car that had been involved in a road traffic accident became stranded on Grove Ferry level crossing, between Sturry and Minster, and was hit by the 13:42 Ramsgate to Minster. Fortunately, nobody was in the car at the time. Leading unit 375903 suffered some bodywork damage. Trains terminated at Canterbury West or were diverted via Deal until 17:00. A points failure at Streatham and crew shortage badly disrupted Thameslink services via Sutton for most of the day.

Monday 30 Sept: The 05:51 West Hampstead Thameslink to Rainham failed to switch to DC at City Thameslink and terminated there. It departed empty to Cricklewood after a delay of twenty minutes. A Balfour Beatty rail head treatment train failed on the up line at Poole about 19:35 causing delays and cancellations for the rest of the evening.

Tuesday 1 Oct: A track circuit failure put platforms 1 to 3 at Charing Cross out of use for two hours from 21:30. A few trains were diverted to Cannon Street.

Wednesday 2 Oct: Unit 700041, running empty from Bellingham to Orpington, became stranded at Bickley about 06:00 after striking an object on the track. It was able to continue to Orpington four hours later following repair. A points failure at Preston Park about 10:30 caused Brighton trains to turn back there or at Haywards Heath until early afternoon. The 10:40 Victoria to Ramsgate was involved in a fatality at West Dulwich. Trains were diverted via Catford until the line reopened about 13:00. Locomotive 73119 failed at Crowhurst about 12:30 when running light from Tonbridge West Yard to St Leonards Depot. It was on the move again an hour later, with delays to following services.

Thursday 3 Oct: Morning peak services were severely disrupted by a broken rail at New Cross Gate. Many trains were cancelled, with a few Southern services diverted via Tulse Hill.

Friday 4 Oct: South Western Railway had a particularly difficult day. A track circuit failure caused delays to early morning services at Brockenhurst and cancellation of the first two Lymington trains. The 06:11 Brockenhurst to Weymouth was doubly curtailed. It had to start at Bournemouth and terminated at Dorchester South because of a points failure. Other services through Dorchester were unaffected. A further points failure at Redbridge, about 10:20, blocked all lines. The 09:23 Portsmouth Harbour to Cardiff Central had to return to Southampton Central and was

eventually able to resume its journey about 1½ hours late. There were significant delays to other trains, with some diversions via Chandlers Ford, throughout the afternoon. The service was disrupted into the evening. Adding to the difficulties, the 12:23 Portsmouth Harbour to Cardiff Central terminated at Portsmouth & Southsea with a brake problem, preventing departures from the Harbour for half an hour. A track circuit failure caused the 09:24 Waterloo to Alton to terminate at Farnham, as did most other Alton trains for the rest of the morning. About the same time a signalling failure at Norwood Junction caused congestion, which resulted in some London Overground trains being diverted to Crystal Palace instead of West Croydon. This continued until 17:40, when a major signalling failure at Sydenham resulted in very few trains running for the rest of the day and hardly any diversions.

Sunday 6 Oct: A power failure resulted in the 18:12 London Bridge to Caterham terminating at Purley and there were no further trains to Caterham until the 20.12.

Monday 7 Oct: A track circuit failure at Charing Cross in the middle of the afternoon prevented use of platform 1 for the rest of the day, resulting in some trains being diverted to Cannon Street.

Tuesday 8 Oct: An infrastructure test train was scheduled to arrive at Blackfriars platform 2 via London Bridge at 05:36 and return the same way ten minutes later. It arrived early at 05:28, but did not depart until 06:20, thereby causing severe delays to northbound Thameslink services and consequential disruption until mid-morning. There were no up trains through Liphook until after 08:00, because of a defective conductor rail. Trains were diverted via Winchester and some down trains turned back at Haslemere. A signal failure at Hilsea, also on the up line, added to the disruption, with some Southern services terminating and starting at Barnham, Chichester or Havant. The line was blocked for about two hours after the 16:17 Weymouth to Waterloo was involved in a fatality at Dorchester South. A conductor rail fault in Penge Tunnel required down trains to be diverted via Catford from 16:15, with up trains diverted later while repairs were carried out. Both lines reopened shortly after 21:00.

Thursday 10 Oct: A door fault caused the 07:26 Orpington to Charing Cross, units 707009+028, to terminate at Elmstead Woods. Following the 07:26 Brighton to Hastings and 06:52 Hastings to Brighton there were no trains in either direction between Eastbourne and Lewes until the 08:24 Victoria to Eastbourne and 08:35 Ore to Brighton, because of a signalling problem.

Friday 11 Oct: A points failure at Victoria put platforms 9, 10 and 11 out of use all day. Gatwick Express was cancelled and there were a few cuts to peak suburban services.

Monday 14 Oct: The 04:00 Gillingham to Dartford became stranded at Strood, because of a conductor rail fault. There were no trains at Strood until after 09:00 and very few for the rest of the morning. The 09:04 Farnham to Guildford terminated at Ash, because of flooding, and the line remained closed until late afternoon. There was also flooding, though less disruptive, at Farnham and Hildenborough. The 10:52 Waterloo to Weybridge, units 458426+425, failed between Staines and Egham, blocking the line for about half an hour.

Tuesday 15 Oct: The 13:56 Ashford to Victoria terminated at Bearsted, with an axlebox fire on unit 466037. Down evening peak trains were able to run, but otherwise services terminated and started at Maidstone East or were diverted via Tonbridge. The failed train was moved on a skate to Ashford during the night.

Thursday 17 Oct: A track circuit failure in Polhill Tunnel caused significant disruption until early afternoon. Trains terminated and started at Orpington or were diverted via Bat & Ball.

Friday 18 Oct: The 12:32 Cannon Street to Dartford was involved in a fatality near Erith and terminated at Slade Green 96 minutes late. Other trains, in both directions, were diverted via Bexleyheath meantime.

Saturday 19 Oct: About 07:20 locomotive 70007 failed between Salisbury Tunnel Jn and Dean while hauling a Trafford Park to Southampton Maritime freight. An assisting locomotive had to be sent from Southampton and the train was on the move by 11:20.

Sunday 20 Oct: An axle-counter failure between Staines and Longcross about 10:30 brought all services to a halt until midday.

Monday 21 Oct: The leading bogie of unit 375918 derailed on entering Grove Park Depot shortly before 09:00. Unfortunately, that left the rear of the train blocking the down slow line for the rest of the morning. Stopping trains were diverted via the down fast line, causing some congestion and delays. Some evening peak services were delayed or cancelled, because of difficulties moving trains from the depot. 375918 was rerailed during the evening.

Wednesday 23 Oct: The 18:10 from Weybridge hit an e-bike when approaching Hounslow. The train was immobilised, with the e-bike wedged under the leading bogie of unit 458416. Passengers had to be evacuated to another train. After the e-bike had been extricated the train was able to run empty to Wimbledon Park about 21:45 and the line re-opened about 22:00.

Thursday 24 Oct: Services between Maidstone West and Strood were suspended during the afternoon, because of a points failure. The 12:03 from Paddock Wood terminated at Maidstone West. Trains resumed with the 13:33 from Paddock Wood, running 20 minutes late. A track circuit failure at Redhill caused significant disruption for about three hours from 15:00. Great Western trains were unable to run to and from Gatwick Airport and many southbound Thameslink services were diverted via the Quarry Line.

Saturday 26 Oct: A signalling fault at Beckenham Junction resulted in all trains being diverted via Catford until after 09:00. The 13:50 from Victoria was delayed by 2½ hours, because of an obstruction on the line between Dormans and East Grinstead.

AROUND THE REGION

Folkestone Warren: A herd of goats has taken up residence at Folkestone Warren, as part of a project by Network Rail and White Cliffs Countryside Project. The goats' natural grazing of the cliff slopes encourages the growth of rare species and will, over time, return the Warren to its previous less overgrown landscape. It is also much easier and safer to allow goats to look after cliff vegetation than to have humans doing so. Obviously, the tracks remain securely fenced and the goats will not be working there.

Swale: The Sheerness branch is closed from the evening of 25 October until early on 3 November, to allow replacement of more cables that lift the deck. This completes work that also caused the line to be closed for periods during the summer.

Victoria: The new ticket gateline has come into use on the Brighton side of Victoria station. This is set back further from the platforms than the previous gateline.

Lymington: The Lymington branch is closed from 26 October until 3 November inclusive for track renewals and repairs to Lymington Viaduct. Further work to the viaduct will take place between 21 December and 5 January.

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