

REGIONAL REVIEW: NOVEMBER 2024

STOCK NOTES

Classes 158 and 159: South Western Railway's diesel units have been fitted with improved sanders. The rate at which sand is deposited varies according to speed and track conditions.

Class 458: The last unit to go to Widnes for refurbishment, 458514, was hauled from Bournemouth on 13 November. 458403 was delivered to Bournemouth on 20 November.

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

12 November: 701006 Derby to Wimbledon Park

14 November: 701007 Derby to Eastleigh

Storage locations for class 701 in early November were:

Bicester: 701009/15/20/21/24/27/40/53-56, 701505-07/11/13-16/20-23/25-27/30

Long Marston: 701002/03/05/13/18/26/51/57-60, 701509/12/17/19

Marchwood: 701004/14/16/19/22/29/32/38

Worksop: 701001, 701501

Most other units are on the SWR network, though not necessarily in use. A few remain at Derby.

TIMETABLES AND DIAGRAMS

Southern: Changes to the Southern timetable on 15 December include a half hourly service to East Grinstead throughout the evening, with additional round trips from Victoria at 20:20 and 21:20. There will also be an additional 22:07 London Bridge to Uckfield, filling a two hour gap. Bognor Regis gains a peak hour service to and from London Bridge via Crawley, at 07:02 from Bognor and 18:03 from London Bridge. There will also be additional suburban services between Norwood Junction and London Bridge via Forest Hill, East Croydon and Victoria via Selhurst, and Sutton and London Bridge via Mitcham Junction.

INTERESTING WORKINGS

Great Western Sleeper: Carriages used on the Night Riviera Sleeper service are receiving attention at Eastleigh Works. 20007+20205 topped and tailed SO 12142 back to Reading Depot from Eastleigh Works on 2 November and returned the same day with sleeping car 10601. 50008 hauled SO 12100 from Reading to Eastleigh on 14 November.

Class 455: Units 455720+455739 were working on the Reading line on 30 October, but came out of service after failing at Winnersh on the 09:20 from Waterloo.

RAIL BUSINESS

Elizabeth Line: MTR Corporation, the current operator of the Elizabeth Line, has been unsuccessful in bidding for a new contract. From May 2025 the service will be provided by GTS Rail Operations, a joint venture between Go-Ahead, Tokyo Metro and Sumitomo Corporation (a large Japanese business and industrial group). Go-Ahead is the lead partner, with a 65% stake. Tokyo Metro and Sumitomo Corporation each have 17.5%. The new contract will run for at least seven years, meaning that the Elizabeth Line is likely to be the last outsourced heavy rail operation in the UK.

London Overground: The new names for London Overground lines were introduced from 21 November, but Transport for London says it will take nine days for all signage, passenger information systems and maps on trains to be updated. Station signage has been changed over several months, with the new signs temporarily covered by stick on ones with 'London Overground' branding that can quickly be peeled off. The new names include Windrush Line (Services via the East London Line) and Mildmay Line (Stratford to Richmond and Clapham Junction).

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.

P7	15 September to 12 October	MAA to 12 October
All TOCs	65.3%	67.1%
SWR	64.2% (12 th)	66.6% (12 th)
GTR	66.2% (10 th)	67.8% (10 th)
SE	64.3% (11 th)	67.5% (11 th)

In recent weeks South Western Railway has been disrupted by staff shortages. These have mostly been lack of train crew, resulting in train cancellations. The Lymington branch has been a particular victim, but other areas have been affected. The Isle of Wight has been disrupted by a shortage of signallers, with early morning and evening services sometimes provided by buses.

The three main Southern operators are closely grouped when it comes to performance, which may be a reflection of how much they depend on Network Rail's Southern Region and how it performs. It is of note that, among the three, South Western Railway is the worst performing, though by a small margin. Given the advantages that it has with a simpler network than the other two and numerous grade-separated junctions, SWR really should be doing better.

It is also of note that most of the operators performing better than the Southern three have smaller and, in some cases, largely self-contained networks. The stand out best performer, on the basis of 85.6% MAA, is Greater Anglia, which has an almost new train fleet and much of its network signalled from a small number of locations. The worst performers are long-distance and open access operators, with Avanti bottom of the table at 41.1% MAA. The worst-performing operator providing local services is Northern at 58% MAA.

The operator consistently providing a performance similar to the Southern three is ScotRail, at 69% MAA. The vast majority of its services are intensive, short- and medium-distance suburban and inter-urban workings, very similar to those provided by the Southern operators.

Tuesday 29 Oct: The 21:26 Ashford to Victoria hit a refuse bin on the line between West Malling and Borough Green. It terminated at Borough Green almost two hours late, with passengers going forward on the similarly delayed 22:14 Maidstone East to Cannon Street (which terminated at London Bridge at 01:00).

Wednesday 30 Oct: A points failure at East Croydon caused delays and cancellations from late afternoon onwards. The 22:50 from Sevenoaks was delayed by almost an hour after an intoxicated passenger attempted to leave the train between Waterloo East and Charing Cross.

Thursday 31 Oct: A points failure at Tanner's Hill Junction (St Johns) caused major delays and numerous cancellations for most of the day. The up fast line could not be used until about 09:30. The service recovered sufficiently for the evening peak service to run reasonably well.

Friday 1 Nov: A road accident at Pooley Green, between Staines and Egham, about 14:15 resulted in a car crashing through the lineside fence onto the track. Some trains were diverted via Chertsey, but many were cancelled. Normal services resumed shortly before 18:00.

Monday 4 Nov: The 21:35 (previous day) Waterloo to Weymouth was involved in a fatality at Holton Heath.

Tuesday 5 Nov: A track defect between Haywards Heath and Wivelsfield caused the down line to be closed for about an hour from 08:00. The 05:46 from Bedford and the 07:16 Victoria to Eastbourne ran via the up line, but following trains terminated short. Some trains between Victoria and Littlehampton were diverted via Crawley and disruption continued throughout the morning. The down line at Wanborough was closed for two hours shortly after 13:00, because of a track

fault. Trains from Guildford to Farnham were diverted via Woking and Great Western services were delayed or cancelled.

Wednesday 6 Nov: A points failure at Gloucester Road Junction resulted in early morning trains from Sutton to Victoria via Selhurst being diverted via Mitcham Junction or Crystal Palace. The 06:42 Waterloo to Portsmouth Harbour terminated at Clapham Junction with a brake fault. A points failure at Keymer Junction about 07:30 prevented trains running from Lewes via Cooksbridge. Services were diverted via Brighton for two hours and normal working resumed with the 08:22 Ore to Victoria. A track circuit failure at Arundel Junction about 07:30 prevented trains running to and from the Arun Valley line. The 06:35 and 07:05 from Victoria turned back at Arundel and there were no further trains south from Horsham until the Bognor portion of the 12:05 from Victoria. Meantime, some trains were diverted via Hove, but there were many cancellations. Consequential disruption continued into the evening. The 08:02 Portsmouth Harbour to Waterloo was 20 minutes late departing and terminated at Fratton with a traction fault.

Thursday 7 Nov: The 11:52 Waterloo to Weybridge was delayed by 1¼ hours at Egham, because of a points failure at Virginia Water. Following trains terminated short or were cancelled, but the 13:20 Waterloo to Reading was diverted via Chertsey. Normal service resumed by 16:00. The slow lines were blocked after the 14:08 from Epsom Downs was involved in a fatality at Streatham Common. Gatwick Express services were cancelled in order to provide capacity for suburban trains on the fast lines. Normal working resumed about 17:30.

Friday 8 Nov: A points failure at Norwood Junction caused morning peak London Overground services to and from West Croydon to be cancelled or diverted to Crystal Palace. A signalling failure on the Chatham line on the approach to Victoria caused delays to Southeastern services until early afternoon. Until 10:00 some trains were diverted to Cannon Street or Blackfriars.

Saturday 9 Nov: A track defect at Old Kent Road Junction meant that there were no trains between Surrey Quays and Clapham Junction or between London Bridge and Tulse Hill until after 08:00.

Sunday 10 Nov: Sadly, a passenger on the 08:48 Bournemouth to Waterloo was taken ill and died at Winchester. The train terminated there and was detained in the platform for almost three hours. Following trains had to run via the down line from Eastleigh, causing delays to down trains. The 10:40 and 11:40 Bournemouth to Manchester were diverted via Chandlers Ford and Andover.

Monday 11 Nov: A points failure put platform 8 at London Bridge out of use during the morning peak. All trains towards Charing Cross had to use platform 9, resulting in some services being diverted to Cannon Street. The 14:55 Portsmouth Harbour to Waterloo failed between Shawford and Winchester. After about two hours it was possible for the train to go forward to Basingstoke in two portions, after the front unit had been detached from the other two. Meantime trains in both directions had to use the down line between Eastleigh and Winchester, with consequent delays and cancellations for the rest of the day. The 17:05 Waterloo to Weymouth was diverted via Havant, but terminated at Wareham 65 minutes late.

Tuesday 12 Nov: A DB Cargo freight from Dollands Moor to Daventry slipped to a stand on the gradient between West Malling and Borough Green about 08:00 and was assisted forward at 12:20. Most passenger trains were cancelled meantime. A railhead treatment train failed at Effingham Junction during the afternoon, resulting in delays to passenger services into the evening. A few trains were diverted via Woking. The 15:20 Waterloo to Axminster terminated at Clapham Junction, with a brake problem. Fast trains had to be diverted via the down slow line for almost an hour. The 17:28 Faversham to St Pancras was involved in a fatality at Teynham, resulting in the line being closed until 22:00. The 18:13 from Alton terminated at Ash Vale with a brake problem.

Wednesday 13 Nov: A signalling failure at Milford disrupted morning services, with some trains diverted via Winchester. A signalling problem between Wimbledon and Earlsfield that could not quickly be resolved disrupted the service for most of the day. Shepperton trains were diverted via Twickenham. Some up suburban services ran non-stop from Surbiton or New Malden and only down trains called at Earlsfield. The 15:50 Eastbourne to Ashford terminated at Hastings, because of a points failure at Ore and there were no further trains between Hastings and Ashford until the 19:50 from Eastbourne. Trains scheduled to terminate at Ore were cut back to Hastings.

Thursday 14 Nov: The 06:30 Kingston Loop service terminated at Twickenham, because of a fault on units 455860+455870.

Saturday 16 Nov: Evening services through Gravesend were disrupted after a bicycle was thrown onto the line. The 20:37 Poole to Waterloo was involved in a fatality at New Milton, resulting in the line being blocked until after midnight.

Monday 18 Nov: A railhead treatment train failed on the up line near Streatham Hill about 16:00. The 15:28 London Bridge to Victoria was stuck behind it at and the 15:55 West Croydon to Victoria was held at Gipsy Hill. Both were diverted to London Bridge via Tulse Hill shortly before 17:00. Later trains were diverted via Selhurst, with trains from

London Bridge to Victoria reversing at East Croydon and running non-stop to Clapham Junction. Another RHTT was summoned from Horsham to assist the failure and normal service resumed with the 18:51 from West Croydon. The 17:31 Cannon Street to Dartford failed at Belvedere, but was able to proceed 83 minutes later, to terminate at Slade Green. Several trains were trapped behind it, but others were diverted via Bexleyheath.

Tuesday 19 Nov: A points failure at Waterloo put Windsor relief line 1 out of use during the morning peak. This is one of the pair of tracks that accesses the former international platforms, 20 to 24. With only one track available, some trains had to be diverted to the main station, resulting in congestion and delays. Evening trains through Chichester were delayed by a lineside fire thought to involve gas cylinders.

Wednesday 20 Nov: An early morning points failure at Selhurst prevented trains running from West Croydon. Services were diverted via Mitcham Junction or Crystal Palace, or were cancelled. Normal service resumed late morning. A power failure on the Sole Street line about 08:00 caused major delays. The 07:45 from Gillingham, 06:48 from Dover and 07:02 from Ramsgate were all stranded in the dead area and unable to proceed for over two hours. The 08:15 from Gillingham terminated at Sole Street. Trains in both directions were cancelled or diverted via Dartford until late morning. Consequential disruption continued through the afternoon. A railhead treatment train, worked by 69008 and 69013, failed on the down line between Dorking and Holmwood late in the afternoon, resulting in there being no trains between Dorking and Horsham until 18:00. Vandals caused a fire on the line at New Eltham about 16:00, resulting in damage to the track. Down trains were unable to run, so were diverted via Bexleyheath or cancelled for five hours.

Thursday 21 Nov: Two sets of points at Brockenhurst became blocked by snow mid-morning, because the point heaters were not working. The points were manually cleared in little over an hour, but it was then discovered that two trees had come down, blocking the line near Sway. The line was clear by 14:00, but the service was badly disrupted for the rest of the day.

Friday 22 Nov: Southern services to and from Southampton were disrupted for much of the day by a points failure at Cosham. Trains were curtailed, cancelled, delayed and diverted. Trains were unable to call at Gatwick Airport for about 4½ hours from 10:30, as a result of a suspect item being found at the South Terminal. Additional calls were made at Horley and Three Bridges, with Great Western services terminating and starting at Redhill.

Saturday 23 Nov: Strong winds brought trees down onto the railway between Ramsgate and Minster, Sevenoaks and Swanley and Fareham and Bursledon. The 15:14 Maidstone East to Charing Cross hit a tree at Kemsing and the line was closed until about 20:00. Evening services between Ashford and Hastings were disrupted by a points failure at Rye.

Sunday 24 Nov: Further high winds brought trees down onto the railway at Cobham, Ashted, Brookwood, Hildenborough and Cowden during the morning. The 11:18 Kingston Loop service was delayed by an hour after hitting a tree at Norbiton. Trees blocked lines during the afternoon and evening between Herne Hill and West Dulwich and at Kew Bridge, Aylesford, Sturry, Fleet, Bookham, Charlton, Staplehurst and Maidstone East. Evening services were disrupted by a points failure at Oxted.

Monday 25 Nov: An overnight points failure at East Croydon put platform 1 out of use until late evening, causing congestion and delays at peak times. The 13:00 from Weymouth was delayed at Winchester and terminated at Basingstoke, because of a small fire on unit 444004. A points failure at Norwood Junction caused delays and cancellations to trains via West Croydon during the afternoon.

AROUND THE REGION

Level Crossings: Network Rail, Southern Region has a project to equip fourteen foot crossings, mostly on public footpaths, with miniature stop lights. These will give users a clear indication of when it is safe to cross the line. The crossings are all ones where there has been a high level of misuse and not all are on heavily-used lines. Two are on the line between Ashford and Hastings.

Southeastern Stations: Southeastern has announced a programme of work to improve twenty of its busiest stations, including repainting and repairs. The work is scheduled to be completed in March 2025 and the stations concerned are: Ashford International, Bromley South, Canterbury West, Chatham, Dartford, Gillingham, Gravesend, Greenwich, Grove Park, Hither Green, New Cross, Orpington, Sevenoaks, Sidcup, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Waterloo East and Woolwich Arsenal. A further 116 stations will be deep-cleaned.

Robertsbridge: A new Mobile Operations Managers' Depot has opened in the station building at Robertsbridge. Previously, when there was a problem on the Hastings line a mobile operations manager had to travel from Ashford or Paddock Wood, so the new depot allows a much quicker response time.

Plumstead: New lifts to the platforms at Plumstead were formally inaugurated on 8 November.

Victoria Area Signalling Centre: Following the resignalling of the Peckham Rye, Tulse Hill and Crystal Palace area, completed during line closures from 26 October until 1 November, Victoria ASC now controls just the Chatham lines from Battersea Pier Junction and Elephant & Castle (both exclusive) to Longfield, Kemsing and Bat & Ball via Catford and via Herne Hill.

Station Plans: Govia Thameslink Railway has produced 3D plans of some of its stations, in order to help passengers find their way around. Stations concerned include Brighton, City Thameslink, Denmark Hill, East Croydon, Elephant & Castle, Gatwick Airport, London Blackfriars and Peckham Rye. The plans can be viewed on a smartphone and other devices.

Thameslink: Work over the Christmas and New Year holiday period includes closure of the Thameslink route between St Pancras and Herne Hill, for track renewals between Blackfriars and Farringdon. The line is closed between 25 and 29 December. There will be two Thameslink trains per hour between London Bridge and Brighton and hourly services from London Bridge to Rainham and Victoria to Sevenoaks via Swanley. There will be no Wimbledon Loop trains.

Guildford: A footbridge at Greville Close, over the line to Wanborough, was demolished between 8 and 15 November. Surrey County Council, which was responsible for the structure, said it was beyond economic repair, because of severe corrosion, and posed safety risks to the public and the railway. The council says it is "actively assessing the feasibility of constructing a new bridge". Egerton Road overbridge is nearby, so justifying expenditure on a new footbridge, rather than other council priorities, might be difficult.

Woking to Aldershot and Basingstoke: Engineering work means that lines between Woking, Aldershot and Farnborough will be closed from 23 December to 3 January. The closure is extended, for other work, to Basingstoke on 4 January and Andover and Winchester on 5 January. Normal service resumes on 6 January. Prior to that the line will be closed between Woking, Aldershot and Basingstoke on 15 December and there will be an amended service from 16 to 22 December. Work being undertaken includes renewal of Pirbright Junction, strengthening embankments at Hook and improving drainage between Brookwood and Farnborough. From 15 December until 5 January West of England trains will terminate and start at Basingstoke and trains between London and Southampton will be diverted via Havant. Alton will be served via Guildford.

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