

### SOUTHEASTERN NETWORKER RAILTOUR

Southeastern is running a railtour with Networker 465908 on 27 September. Route is Victoria (10:00), Kent House, Orpington, Chislehurst, Grove Park Depot (via the carriage washer, schedule permitting), Lee Spur, Slade Green, Greenwich, Cannon Street (12:57). The fare is £45 and tickets can be purchased at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/southeastern-railway-200-networker-train-tour-tickets-1421434953209>

### STOCK NOTES

**Class 455:** Blue/grey unit 455868 is now off-lease and remains at Derby, while possible preservation is negotiated. Further scrap moves from Wimbledon to Newport have been:

28 July	455859+455861
31 July	455867+455904
11 August	455915+455919
18 August	455866+455874
20 August	455854+455908

**Class 458:** Unit 458536 was hauled from Wimbledon to Long Marston on 6 August

**Class 466:** Units 466029+466031 were hauled from Gillingham to Newport for scrapping on 14 August. 466017+466030 were hauled from Ely to Kingsbury on 19 August.

**Class 701:** Recent moves to and from storage include:

5 August	701040 Bicester MoD to Wimbledon
6 August	701520+701522 Eastleigh to Long Marston
11 August	701060 Long Marston to Eastleigh
19 August	701054 Bicester MoD to Wimbledon
20 August	701508 Eastleigh to Derby
26 August	701027 Bicester MoD to Eastleigh

**Class 769:** Driving trailer 77333 from unit 769922, stored at Stoke-on-Trent, was destroyed by fire on 1 August. This unit was originally 319422, converted to tri-mode for Great Western, but never used as such. It is one of the units that received attention from Brodie Engineering and ran trials from Kilmarnock in 2024.

### TIMETABLES AND DIAGRAMS

**Class 701:** From 20 July there was a class 701 Monday to Friday diagram covering 05:26, 17:50 and 21:20 Waterloo to Reading and 07:09, 19:39 and 23:11 return.

**West of England:** Prolonged dry weather caused embankments on the West of England line to shrink, affecting the track. A 40 mph speed restriction was imposed over four miles in the Crewkerne area. In an effort to minimise disruption, trains did not call at Crewkerne from 28 July and a replacement road service operated between Yeovil Junction and Axminster via Crewkerne. With speed restrictions having been extended in total to more than twelve miles between Gillingham and Axminster, an emergency timetable was introduced from 11 August. Trains resumed calling at Crewkerne, but ran hourly to Yeovil Junction, and two-hourly to Exeter. The journey time to Yeovil was extended by about 25 minutes and to Exeter by an hour. As well as significant slow running, the single track sections resulted in trains having extended stops at some loops.

## INTERESTING WORKINGS

**Ashford Open Day:** Southeastern staged an Open Day at Ashford Depot on 24 August. Rolling stock on display included units 465908, 376019 and Hastings DEMU 1013. 395010 was on jacks in the main shed and 466019 was used for re-railing demonstrations. Locomotives present were the depot's Sentinel diesel-hydraulic shunter, class 12 diesel shunter 15224, 20901, 20905, 37254, 66315, 69014, 73128 and two steam engines at opposite ends of the scale, 35028 *Clan Line* and LBSCR 55 *Stepney*. MPVs 98905+98955 were also present, together with tamper DR75201.

**Rail 200 Inspiration Train:** 66710 and 66719 ran from the Bluebell Railway to St Leonards Depot via South Croydon and Eastbourne on 27 July. They returned on 30 July, with 73119 and 73136, via Hastings, Tonbridge, Redhill and South Croydon, before working the train to Derby via Selhurst, Herne Hill and Kew East.

**Rail 200 Greatest Gathering:** The London Underground 4TC was hauled by 50008 from the Mid Hants Railway to Derby via Ascot, Kew East and High Wycombe on 14 July. 313201 was hauled from Eastleigh Works to Derby on 24 July, running via Reading and the Midland Main Line. On the same day 33012 ran light from Swanage to Strawberry Hill via Havant, Chertsey and Twickenham. There it picked up 4Vep 3417 before continuing to West Ruislip via Kensington and Ealing Broadway. After collecting *Sarah Siddons* and an inspection saloon, the train ran to Southall, where it spent the night. On 25 July it continued to Derby via Oxford, Castle Bromwich and Leicester. Unit 465908 was hauled from Slade Green to Derby via Kew East and the Midland Main Line on 26 July. Inspection saloon 975025, the former Hastings DEMU buffet car, now based at Derby, was also on display, as was Eurostar power car 3999. Return workings on 6 August were 73119+73136 on the rear of the Inspiration train to Wembley, 4Vep 3417 to Strawberry Hill hauled by 33012 and 4TC to West Ruislip hauled by 50008. 465908 was returned to Slade Green on 16 August.

**Class 20:** The drain cleaning train was worked from Welwyn Garden City to Woking Up Sidings on 30 July by 20901 and 20905. That evening it ran to Streatham South Junction via Guildford and Bookham. Following work it returned next morning via Selhurst, Redhill and Guildford. Later that day the train ran to Eastleigh East Yard. 20901+20905 worked light from Woking to Ashford and back, via Guildford and Edenbridge, on 7 August, as a route learning trip. Based at Woking, they worked the drain cleaning train overnight on the Ascot to Aldershot line during the week commencing 18 August.

**Class 33:** 33025+33027 worked a tour from Eastleigh to Derby and Barrow Hill via Southampton and Westbury on 2 August. Empty stock was from and to Southall.

**Class 50:** 50008 hauled a Great Western sleeping car to Eastleigh Works on 2 August and returned it to Reading on 16 August.

**Class 90:** 90018, repainted in silver livery, was hauled from Eastleigh Works to Derby on 30 July.

**Class 201:** Unit 1013 worked an excursion from Tonbridge to Minehead on 16 August, out via Herne Hill, Waterloo, Salisbury and Westbury, and return via Reading, Guildford, Waterloo and Herne Hill.

**Class 377:** Five-coach units do not often appear on Coastway routes, but 377612 was noted working the 06:56 Brighton to Ore on 14 August. This was probably part of the arrangements to increase capacity for Eastbourne Air Show (14 to 17 August).

**4TC:** The London Transport 4TC unit was topped and tailed by 50008 and 50049 for a railtour from Princes Risborough and Oxford to Kent on 23 August. This ran via Kensington Olympia to Denmark Hill, Lewisham, Bromley North, Lee Spur, Dartford, Rochester, Ramsgate, Margate, Sheerness, Strood, Maidstone West, Tonbridge, Bat & Ball, Catford, Blackfriars, Canterbury Road Curve, Clapham Junction and Richmond back to Oxford and Princes Risborough.

**Excursions:** On 31 July 47815 and 57313 topped and tailed an excursion from Victoria to Arundel, Littlehampton and Chichester. The outward working was via Stewarts Lane, Selhurst, Redhill and Crawley. The train ran empty from Chichester to Littlehampton via Fratton. The return journey from Littlehampton was via reversal at Arundel, then Chichester, Fareham, Eastleigh, Wimbledon, Tooting and Herne Hill.

**Britannic Explorer:** Belmond’s new luxury train did not get off to a good start. Tours commencing on 4 and 21 July were cancelled at short notice, because of a problem with the interlocking between the train’s doors and the brakes. A public tour commenced on 1 August, but the empty stock from Eastleigh to Stewarts Lane was delayed by 1½ hours at Shawford by a brake problem. The train departed Victoria for Keighley over an hour late but suffered a brake failure at Bletchley and terminated at Bedford St Johns. The train was returned to Eastleigh for further attention. 66722 and 66748 worked the train back to Stewarts Lane on 18 August. A tour of Wales departed from Victoria that afternoon, apparently successfully. The carriages are Mark 3 vehicles built by British Rail Engineering for Córas Iompair Éireann in the 1980s and later adapted for use on Belmond’s Grand Hibernian train, which operated in Ireland between 2016 and 2019. They have been refurbished and mounted on standard gauge bogies. The train will normally be worked by locomotives 66744 and 66748, which have been finished in a special livery.

**Mark 5 Carriages:** Locomotives 68029 and 68032 worked two five-coach sets of Mark 5A carriages from Long Marston to Eastleigh on 12 August. 68020 hauled a further rake of Mark 5A carriages from Longsight to Eastleigh via Oxford on 15 August. The carriages were originally used by TransPennine Express, but are to replace Chiltern Railways’ Mark 3 vehicles. They are being prepared for service at Eastleigh Depot, but with external branding applied at the Works. 68032 worked test runs from Eastleigh to Banbury and Leamington Spa on 18 and 19 August.

**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.

P4	22 June to 19 July	MAA to 19 July
All TOCs	66.20%	66.66%
SWR	61.90% (14 <sup>th</sup> )	64.68% (13 <sup>th</sup> )
GTR	66.22% (10 <sup>th</sup> )	67.90% (9 <sup>th</sup> )
SE	67.80% (8 <sup>th</sup> )	67.80% (10 <sup>th</sup> )

**Wednesday 23 July:** Afternoon trains between Ashford and Hastings were cancelled because heavy rain caused the line to be flooded.

**Friday 25 July:** A points failure at Haywards Heath about 07:00 prevented up trains running through the station. The 06:36 Brighton to Victoria and 06:39 Brighton to Cambridge were stranded south of the station and eventually returned Wivelsfield, crossing to the down line at Keymer Junction. The 06:10 Littlehampton to Victoria was detained for 96 minutes at Burgess Hill until the line re-opened and terminated at Gatwick Airport two hours late. The 06:28 from Eastbourne terminated at Wivelsfield and the 06:19 from Hastings was diverted to Brighton. Further Littlehampton trains were diverted via Horsham and other services in both directions were cancelled while repairs were carried out. A limited service resumed about 09:00, but disruption continued into the afternoon.

**Monday 28 July:** A signalling failure between Meopham and Swanley about 05:50 resulted in the line being closed in both directions. Trains were cancelled or diverted, mostly via Dartford, but some via Maidstone East. The 05:42 Victoria to Dover Priory turned back at Swanley and ran via Chislehurst, Lee Spur and Sidcup. A signalling problem between Sutton and Streatham caused delays to morning peak services, with some trains diverted via West Croydon.

**Tuesday 29 July:** A points failure at Rye caused delays and cancellations throughout the morning. A points failure at Tattenham Corner resulted in several morning trains turning back at Coulsdon Town. A track circuit failure at Blackfriars disrupted services from late afternoon and through the evening. The proceed on sight authority signalling was used, but required the service to be thinned out. That included cancelling trains between Orpington and Luton and reducing the Rainham service to a shuttle from Dartford.

**Wednesday 30 July:** South Western services were disrupted by signalling problems at Queenstown Road and Winchfield during the morning. The line was closed for almost three hours after the 16:09 Waterloo to Portsmouth Harbour was involved in a fatality between Botley and Fareham.

**Thursday 31 July:** A signalling failure at Otford resulted in significant delays throughout the morning. A lorry hit Passford Bridge on the Lymington branch shortly after 08:00, causing the span to move and the track to buckle. The line was closed for the rest of the day. A lightning strike on signalling equipment at Chelsfield about 15:00 resulted in delays, with many

trains diverted via Bat & Ball. The 16:52 Cannon Street roundabout service suffered a brake problem, blocking the up line at Bexleyheath. Following trains were diverted via Sidcup or Woolwich. Normal service resumed with the 18:23 from Dartford. The line was closed for two hours after the 16:03 from Weymouth was involved in a fatality at Wimbledon, but the service was disrupted for the rest of the day.

**Friday 1 August:** A signalling fault resulted in the Uckfield service being reduced to a train every two hours, until late afternoon. There were no trains via Sidcup until after 06:00, because of over-running engineering work. A signal failure in the Staines area about 06:20 put the line from Egham out of use for 2½ hours. Most Chertsey Loop trains were cancelled and those from Reading reversed at Virginia Water and were diverted via Weybridge. The 06:19 and 06:49 from Farnham were diverted via Woking. There were further signalling problems at Staines during the evening, with significant delays to trains. The 21:38 from Epsom Downs was delayed by almost 1½ hours after hitting a waste bin on the track between Selhurst and Thornton Heath. Following trains were diverted to the up fast line or via Crystal Palace.

**Saturday 2 August:** A herd of cattle got onto the line near Uckfield late afternoon. Trains terminated at Crowborough until they could be removed.

**Sunday 3 August:** A power failure early in the afternoon restricted the number of electric trains between Redhill and Tonbridge to just one. This was particularly unfortunate, because Southeastern trains were diverted that way, because of engineering work. Services to Uckfield were again cut back to Crowborough late in the afternoon, this time because of a gas leak. Some trains were diverted via Southampton after the 17:17 Gillingham to Waterloo was involved in a fatality near Overton. The Bognor Regis portion of the 20:35 from Victoria, unit 377108, failed soon after departure from Barnham and there were no trains to Bognor for the rest of the evening. The 21:35 from Victoria was diverted to Littlehampton.

**Monday 4 August:** The 05:55 Poole to Waterloo terminated at Basingstoke, because of a problem with the doors. A signal cable fault put platform 5 at East Croydon and the reversible line to South Croydon out of use for most of the day. The service was thinned out, with trains from Watford Junction terminating at Clapham Junction and those from London Bridge via Streatham terminating at Selhurst. Normal working resumed next morning.

**Tuesday 5 August:** Units 465003 and 465168 became uncoupled on departure from Slade Green Depot, blocking the line to Dartford and preventing other trains leaving the depot. That resulted in significant delays and cancellations during the morning peak.

**Wednesday 6 August:** The 12:03 Victoria to Gravesend terminated at Peckham Rye, with a brake problem. It was eventually found possible to drive the train from the rear cab and it returned empty to Victoria. Following trains were diverted via Herne Hill until after 14:00, but Gravesend trains were cancelled or badly delayed.

**Thursday 7 August:** Unit 701017 failed at Winnersh Triangle while working the 14:39 Reading to Waterloo, blocking the line for almost two hours. A signalling failure on the Uckfield line meant that the 15:07 from London Bridge and subsequent trains terminated at Crowborough. Normal service did not resume until the 20:07. The 18:29 Portsmouth Harbour to Victoria failed upon departure, blocking the up line for about an hour. The 19:38 from Strood was involved in a fatality at Maidstone Barracks.

**Friday 8 August:** A further signalling failure meant that the last train to Uckfield was the 11:07 from London Bridge, after which all trains terminated at Crowborough. Engineers had to find a fault somewhere in a cable 19 miles long and the line did not re-open until 13 August. The line at West Worthing was closed for two hours after the 19:20 Southampton Central to Brighton was involved in a fatality.

**Saturday 9 August:** Over-running engineering work resulted in there being no trains between Haslemere and Havant until 11:25. A very limited shuttle service operated to Haslemere and other trains were cancelled or diverted via Winchester.

**Sunday 10 August:** Services were disrupted from 11:00 by a lineside fire at Westgate-on-Sea. The 09:40 Victoria to Ramsgate was detained at Herne Bay and terminated an hour late at Margate. The 10:53 from Ramsgate was held for over an hour at Broadstairs. The 10:10 Victoria to Ramsgate was diverted via Canterbury East, Dover and Deal and the 11:21 Ramsgate to St Pancras was diverted via Ashford. Other trains suffered lesser delays, with late-running continuing during the afternoon.

**Monday 11 August:** A points failure at Rainham resulted in Thameslink services terminating and starting at Rochester or Gillingham all day. The 06:13 from Hayes terminated short, because of a tree on the line at Lower Sydenham. Services were suspended until 08:30. The 07:27 Kingston loop service terminated at Wimbledon, because of a problem with the doors, blocking the down slow line for about half an hour. The line was closed for about two hours after the 11:42 Littlehampton to Victoria was involved in a fatality at East Worthing. The 13:10 Victoria to Dover Priory failed at Chatham. One of the units working the Sheerness branch was summoned to assist it forward to Gillingham Depot. The line was blocked for about an hour, causing extensive delays. The 15:29 Slade Green to Cannon Street suffered a door problem

and terminated at Woolwich Dockyard, delaying following trains for almost an hour. The 14:43 Rochester to Luton (which started 25 minutes late and omitted all station stops to London Bridge) and the 16:39 Dartford to Cannon Street were diverted via Bexleyheath and the 15:45 Cannon Street roundabout service, outward via Bexleyheath, was diverted via Sidcup. Freightliner locomotive 59202 failed at Balcombe about 18:45 while hauling an empty aggregate train from Crawley New Yard to Merehead. Only a limited passenger service could operate, using the bi-directional up line between Balcombe Tunnel Junction and Copyhold Junction, with trains subject to delay. Priority was given to Eastbourne trains and to Thameslink services between Bedford and Brighton, but these were subject to significant delay. Most Littlehampton trains were diverted via Crawley and Gatwick Express operated only between Victoria and Gatwick. A locomotive came from Acton and coupled to the rear of the train, to take it to Merehead via Kensington, instead of Worthing. Normal working resumed about 23:00.

**Tuesday 12 August:** The 15:33 from Weybridge terminated at Egham and the 15:22 Waterloo to Weybridge terminated at Staines, because of a level crossing failure. The line remained blocked until about 17:00. Some Reading trains were diverted via Chertsey.

**Friday 15 August:** A track defect at Ash resulted in numerous cancellations during the afternoon. A signalling problem between Selhurst and West Croydon resulting in there being no London Overground services for two hours following the arrival at 16:39. Trains were cancelled or diverted to Crystal Palace. Southern services were disrupted for the rest of the day. Trains from Victoria to West Croydon via Crystal Palace ran instead to East Croydon or South Croydon and those to Epsom Downs were diverted via Mitcham Junction. Services on the Sheerness branch were suspended following arrival of the 20:23 from Sittingbourne, in order to allow urgent track repairs.

**Sunday 17 August:** Over-running engineering work prevented any trains running through Arundel Junction until 10:00 and the Littlehampton branch was closed until midday. A points failure about 14:30 prevented trains running between Redhill and Earlswood for 2½ hours. Trains were diverted via the Quarry Line and those from Reading to Gatwick terminated at Redhill. Only Reigate trains were able to serve Coulsdon South and Merstham. The 21:05 Waterloo to Poole became disabled after striking a deer south of Worthing Junction. Passengers had to be evacuated to an empty train on the up line. Other trains were terminated short or diverted via Havant, except for the last up and down services, which were delayed until the line had been cleared. The 20:58 from Weymouth was delayed by half an hour, but the 00:10 from Waterloo was 71 minutes late at Southampton Central.

**Monday 18 August:** A power surge caused the 10:20 Weymouth to Waterloo to fail east of Dorchester South and the 07:35 Waterloo to Weymouth to fail at Upwey. The 08:05 Waterloo to Weymouth succeeded in assisting the 10:20 back to Dorchester South, for passengers to detrain, about 12:30. The train later ran empty to Bournemouth Depot. The 07:35 was able to return to Weymouth about 13:30. Meantime, trains terminated and started at Wareham.

**Tuesday 19 August:** Another points failure at Earlswood prevented trains running to and from Redhill, as on Sunday, for about two hours from 15:20. The line was re-opened without trains being able to cross from the up fast to the up slow line at Earlswood. That caused severe difficulties after a large lorry became wedged under Brighton Road bridge on the Quarry Line early in the evening. Trains were diverted via Redhill for three hours, with all up services having to use the slow line from Tinsley Green Junction, south of Gatwick Airport. That resulted in significant congestion, delays and cancellations. The service had also been disrupted after the 16:57 Brighton to Bedford suffered a brake problem at Balcombe and terminated there, blocking the line for about half an hour.

**Wednesday 20 August:** Unit 377137 became disabled at Queen's Road Peckham about 09:00, while running empty from London Bridge to Selhurst Depot. Shoe gear was displaced and wedged between the conductor rail and running rail. The line was blocked for the rest of the morning while the train was made fit to move and the conductor rail was checked. Trains from London Bridge to East Croydon via Tulse Hill were diverted via Forest Hill and those to Beckenham Junction were cancelled, as were London Overground services between Surrey Quays and Clapham Junction. An empty train from Slade Green Depot to Dartford, comprising units 707016+707022, failed across Dartford Junction with a brake fault. It was not possible to move it back to the depot until late evening. Meantime, only the reversible up main line was available between Dartford Junction and Dartford station. This caused severe disruption and numerous cancellations for the rest of the day.

**Friday 22 August:** A signalling failure at Balcombe Tunnel Junction caused most Gatwick Express services to terminate at Gatwick Airport during the morning. Some Thameslink and Southern services were cancelled and trains from Victoria to Littlehampton were diverted via Crawley.

## AROUND THE REGION

**Hastings Line:** Project Thumper, otherwise known as the Tonbridge to Hastings undrained earthwork and modernisation and engineering research project, is looking into ways of managing the clay cuttings and embankments on the Hastings line. Wadhurst clay is particularly unstable and the Hastings line has many more landslips than others in the area. Network Rail's objective is to better predict and prevent landslips, with the expectation that the results can be applied to other routes. A digital model of the line has been created, using historical records, ground investigations and laser scanning. Tests and trials are being carried out on the Bluebell Railway, because that has similar clay earthworks, and its slower train speeds and easier access make it ideal for testing new approaches to preventing landslips. Also on the Hastings line, Network Rail is experimentally installing Flint IsoMat cooling equipment in a number of signalling equipment cabinets. The temperature in such cabinets can reach 70° C during warm weather, resulting in equipment failures. The IsoMat equipment, mounted on top of the cabinet, includes a heat-exchanger that requires no external power source.

**Lewisham:** Network Rail plans to introduce new signalling in the Lewisham area over the Christmas holiday in 2026. This will replace equipment installed in 1976 and is expected to be much more reliable. The equipment will be self-monitoring, so faults are detected before they become a failure. There will be greater redundancy, with more back-up systems. Much of the equipment will be modular, so faulty items can be replaced very quickly. In connection with this, two relocatable equipment buildings were installed at Parks Bridge Junction over the August bank holiday weekend.

**Portsmouth Direct Line:** New signalling between Farncombe and Petersfield is to be commissioned during a line closure from 25 October and 2 November, with control transferred to Basingstoke ROC. The railway will also be closed every weekend from 27 September until 19 October. Level crossings on the line will be closed to road traffic on various dates from 27 September for upgrading.

**Bournemouth Line:** The footbridges at Sway and Hinton Admiral are being replaced, with work starting in August and expected to continue until October.

**Isle of Wight:** Yet another extended closure of Island Line is planned. The entire line will be closed from Saturday 18 October to Monday 3 November. From Monday 3 to Monday 17 November, trains will only run between Ryde St Johns Road and Shanklin. The work being carried out is principally track repairs, including relaying the line through Ryde Tunnels and renewing the crossover at Ryde Esplanade.

**CORRECTIONS:** Units 455858+455901 were hauled to Newport on 16 July, not 17th. Unit 701025 was working on the Reading line on 18 July, not June.

**CREDITS:** Colin Duff, John Goodrich, Stuart Hicks, Simon Jeffs and Member 980