

## REGIONAL REVIEW: DECEMBER 2025

### CLASS 455: NOT QUITE THE END

Class 455 units have continued going to store, pending scrapping, but some are expected to remain in service into 2026.

Following the financial collapse of Unimetals Recycling, further units have been moved from Wimbledon to Alstom at Derby, Litchurch Lane, thus:

26 November	455711+455728	8 December	455703+455708
1 December	455706+455739	10 December	455709+455720
3 December	455714+455730	15 December	455734+455863

455703+455872, which had been moved from Wimbledon to Newport on 12 November, were hauled from there to Derby on 28 November. 455723 followed on 19 December. 455705 was removed from Wimbledon by road on 2 December.

During the week commencing 8 December there were two diagrammed return workings via Chertsey, 06:52 and 15:52 from Waterloo and 08:33 and 17:40 from Weybridge. Lack of selective door opening required use of a single unit. Unit 455729 was probably the last 455 via Chertsey on 12 December.

Three eight-coach workings are diagrammed Monday to Friday from 15 December until 5 February, but substitution by other types of unit is possible. Units have appeared on other duties. Diagrammed workings are:

5J97	05:23 Wimbledon Park - Hampton Court	05:45
2J08	05:54 Hampton Court - Waterloo	06:31
1D07	06:39 Waterloo - Dorking	07:33
1D16	07:48 Dorking - Waterloo	08:46
2G17	09:03 Waterloo - Guildford via Cobham	10:07
2G28	10:34 Guildford - Waterloo via Cobham	11:37
2F27	11:50 Waterloo - Woking	12:38
2F36	13:03 Woking - Waterloo	13:52
2G37	14:03 Waterloo - Guildford via Cobham	15:07
2G48	15:34 Guildford - Waterloo via Cobham	16:37
2F47	16:50 Waterloo - Woking	17:40
2F56	18:03 Woking - Waterloo	18:52
2G57	19:03 Waterloo - Guildford via Cobham	20:05
2G68	20:34 Guildford - Waterloo via Cobham	21:37
2F67	21:50 Waterloo - Woking	22:38
2F80	23:04 Woking - Waterloo	23:54
5Y68	00:07 FX Waterloo - Wimbledon Park	00:54
5F80	00:06 FO Waterloo - Waterloo Sth Sdg	00:08
5G05	05:44 Waterloo South Siding - Waterloo	05:46
2G05	06:00 Waterloo - Guildford via Cobham	07:01
2D18	07:42 Guildford - Waterloo via Epsom	08:55
2J17	09:06 Waterloo - Hampton Court	09:43
2J24	09:54 Hampton Court - Waterloo	10:31
2D23	10:53 Waterloo - Guildford via Epsom	12:02
2D36	12:45 Guildford - Waterloo via Epsom	13:55
2J37	14:06 Waterloo - Hampton Court	14:43
2J44	14:54 Hampton Court - Waterloo	15:31
2D43	15:53 Waterloo - Guildford via Epsom	17:02
2G54	17:09 Guildford - Waterloo via Cobham	18:10
2F53	18:20 Waterloo - Woking	19:10
2F62	19:33 Woking - Waterloo	20:22
2G63	20:33 Waterloo - Guildford via Cobham	21:37
2G74	22:04 Guildford - Waterloo via Cobham	23:10

2F73	23:20 Waterloo - Woking	00:10
5F73	00:14 Woking - Guildford Up CS	00:22
5G10	05:38 Guildford Up CS - Guildford	05:49
2G10	06:04 Guildford - Waterloo via Cobham	07:08
2F09	07:17 Waterloo - Woking	08:08
2F96	08:20 Woking - Waterloo	09:04
5Y83	09:22 Waterloo - Wimbledon Park	10:11
5F91	15:54 Wimbledon Park - Waterloo	16:34
2F91	17:02 Waterloo - Guildford via Woking	17:57
2G58	18:04 Guildford - Waterloo via Cobham	19:07
2M57	19:17 Waterloo - Chessington South	19:51
2M64	20:10 Chessington South - Waterloo	20:46
2D63	20:53 Waterloo - Guildford via Epsom	22:02
2D78	22:45 Guildford - Waterloo via Epsom	23:56
5D78	00:15 FX Waterloo - Waterloo Sth Sdg	00:17
1D81	00:25 FO Waterloo - Dorking	01:17
5Y73	01:25 FO Dorking - Wimbledon Park	02:00

Unit 455732 worked the 05:26 Waterloo to Reading and 07:09 return on 18 December. Regular workings on the Kingston Loop and to Shepperton had ceased by early December, but on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> 455719+455729 were on Shepperton workings, starting with the 06:42 from Waterloo and concluding with the 23:41 from Shepperton. From late morning trains ran via Twickenham to deal with rugby traffic.

Units 455712+455717 and 455727 were specially prepared at Bournemouth Depot for two farewell railtours, which ran on 21 December. 455727 was scheduled to run from Bournemouth Depot to Wimbledon on 18 December, with 455780, but got no further than Bournemouth station because the line was flooded at Sway. They successfully ran to Wimbledon on 19 December and were followed next day by 455712+455717. The two tours ran about an hour apart, following the same route from Waterloo via East Putney, Strawberry Hill (reverse), Kingston (bay), Richmond, Waterloo, Epsom Up Sidings, Epsom, Dorking, Leatherhead, Guildford, Guildford North Box Sidings, Haslemere, Woking, Chertsey, Feltham Depot Arrival Road, Twickenham (reverse), Fulwell (reverse), Earlsfield and Waterloo. 455712+455717 departed Waterloo at 09:32½ and 455727+455871 followed at 10:35. Next day there were ten units in ordinary passenger service, including all four of those used for the tours, but it is uncertain how long this will continue.

## STOCK NOTES

**Class 376:** The first unit to have a refurbished interior is 376027. Others had already been finished in Southeastern's blue livery, but without internal alterations. Units now being refurbished are fitted with USB and electric sockets and LED lighting. Seats are refurbished, with the priority seats marked more prominently. Grab poles and handles are orange, instead of yellow, in order to make them more easily visible to those with limited vision. The work is being carried out at Grove Park.

**Class 377:** Units 377131 to 377133 transferred from Southern to Southeastern prior to the December timetable change.

**Class 387:** Unit 387303 has been observed working for Southern. Unit 387216 has been temporarily finished in a 'Santa Train' livery, with festive embellishments on the driving coaches, including over some of the windows.

**Class 395:** The two damaged vehicles from unit 395008, PDS 39081 and MS 39082, were hauled from Southampton Eastern Docks to Eastleigh on 12 December by 20205. 20007 was on the rear, to lead into Eastleigh Works.

**Classes 465 & 466:** Units 465905 and 466010 were hauled from Ely to the scrapyards at Kingsbury on 10 December.

**Class 701:** Unit 701 has been named *Phoenix*, in honour of Aldershot Town FC, whose symbol is a phoenix. The 06:46 Farnham to Waterloo via Ascot and 19:21 return were worked by a class 701 from 17 November. Further moves from Marchwood to Wimbledon have been 701038 on 9 December, 701032 on 16 December and 701029 on 18 December.

## TIMETABLES AND DIAGRAMS

**Class 458:** The remaining class 458/5 units, 458530/33/35, are expected to be withdrawn when more class 701s are in service. They have two Monday to Friday diagrams, both for a single unit, from 15 December until 5 February, thus:

5C90	05:42	Wimbledon Park - Waterloo	05:58
2C09	06:20	Waterloo - Reading	07:42
2C20	08:09	Reading - Waterloo	09:33
2C23	09:50	Waterloo - Reading	11:12
2C34	11:39	Reading - Waterloo	13:05
2V43	15:37	Waterloo - Waterloo	17:00 via Brentford and Twickenham
2R49	17:15	Waterloo - Waterloo	18:39 via Twickenham and Brentford
2S59	18:52	Waterloo - Weybridge	20:08
2S68	20:33	Weybridge - Waterloo	21:56
2U73	22:33	FX Waterloo - Windsor	23:26
2U80	23:37	FX Windsor - Staines	23:51
5U80	23:55	FX Staines - Staines CHS	23:59
2S73	22:22	FO Waterloo - Weybridge	23:28
5Y66	23:42	FO Weybridge - Wimbledon Park	00:11
5R02	05:38	Staines CHS - Hounslow	05:59
2R02	06:01	Hounslow - Waterloo	06:38 via Brentford
2S11	06:52	Waterloo - Weybridge	08:08
2S20	08:33	Weybridge - Waterloo	09:55
5Y86	10:10	Waterloo - Wimbledon Park	10:59
5S47	15:23	Wimbledon Park - Waterloo	15:39
2S47	15:52	Waterloo - Weybridge	17:08
2S56	17:40	Weybridge - Waterloo	18:56
2V57	19:07	Waterloo - Twickenham	19:56 via Brentford
5V58	20:00	FX Twickenham - Waterloo	20:22
2S73	22:22	FX Waterloo - Weybridge	23:38
5Y66	23:42	FX Weybridge - Wimbledon Park	00:27
5Y60	20:06	FO Twickenham - Wimbledon Park	20:55

There is one Sunday diagram:

5U78	23:10	Wimbledon Park - Waterloo	23:26
2U79	23:44	Waterloo - Staines	00:30
5U80	00:42	Staines - Staines CHS	00:46

**Class 701:** 32 units were diagrammed for service from the start of the new timetable on 14 December.

**Eastbourne:** Although it was originally announced that Thameslink would be operating the reinstated peak services between Eastbourne and London Bridge, they are actually run by Southern, as might have been expected. The trains are 06:47 from Eastbourne and 17:03 from London Bridge, running Monday to Thursday. The local Member of Parliament and the Leader of Eastbourne Borough Council were at the station on Monday 15 December to see off the first London Bridge train.

## INTERESTING WORKINGS

**Class 33:** 33025+33207 worked a return excursion from Victoria to York via Kew East and the Midland Main Line on 20 December.

**Class 57:** The final Pathfinder Railtour ran on 20 December from Salisbury via Westbury to the Copy Pit line over the Pennines, worked to and from Gloucester by 57008 and 57314.

**Class 377:** Unit 377621 was working between Brighton and Southampton on 4 and 5 December. On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> it was on the 11:43 to Southampton and 13:50 return. It continued on the 15:43 from Brighton, but terminated at Barnham, because of late running. It returned to Brighton in the path of the 17:50 from Southampton and then did 19:43 to Southampton and 21:50 return. Next day it worked 06:43 and 10:43 from Brighton and 08:50 and 12:50 from Southampton. The 11:06 Victoria to West Croydon was formed of units 377313+377607 on 10 December, a combination of 377/3 and 377/6 being somewhat unusual.

**Class 458:** Although no longer diagrammed for use at weekends, or on the Kingston Loop, on 20 December units 458530+458533 were on Kingston services, with departures from Waterloo between 06:27 and 23:00.

**Brake Test:** Following research by the Rail Safety & Standards Board and consultation with Network Rail, Southeastern has abandoned the requirement for train drivers to make a brake test. The long-standing rule for many years is that soon after taking over a train the driver should try out the brake while the train is in motion. Modern trains have cab displays which indicate any faults to the driver and unnecessary brake applications have an adverse impact on performance. With the tight headways on Southeastern, following trains may encounter restrictive signal aspects if a brake test is carried out. A brake test will still be required if a train is entering service after work has been carried out on the brakes. Other passenger operators are likely to adopt the same practice, but the brake test will remain essential on freight trains where wagons are not self-monitoring and brake connections are made manually.

**CrossCountry via Guildford:** On Sundays 4 January and 15 March, CrossCountry trains between Reading and Southampton are scheduled to run via Guildford and Havant.

## RAIL BUSINESS

**London Overground:** First Group has been named as preferred bidder to operate London Overground from May 2026, instead of Arriva, the current operator. This should not make much difference so far as passengers are concerned, because the operator works to a strict specification in the contract from Transport for London. More trains on the East London Line and between Clapham Junction and Shepherds Bush would have been introduced by whoever won the contract.

**Station Use:** Data for 2024/25 released by the Office of Rail & Road shows the busiest and least busy Southern Electric stations to be as listed, with national ranking of the top ten and the estimated number of journeys shown.

Station	Rank	Journeys	Station	Journeys
Waterloo	2	70,389,546	Pevensey Bay	5,848
London Bridge	5	54,685,648	Swale	7,300
Victoria	6	53,784,358	Smallbrook Junction	8,978
Clapham Junction	18	24,447,510	Faygate	9,478
Gatwick Airport	21	21,211,048	Warnham	9,706
East Croydon	22	20,592,106	Snowdown	11,674
Charing Cross	23	19,767,784	Beltring	14,532
Vauxhall	26	15,534,168	Kemsing	16,834
Brighton	28	15,328,450	Brading	17,080
Blackfriars	29	15,193,088	Lake	19,774

Pevensey Bay is positively bustling by comparison with Doleham, the least used Southern station, where there were just 1,706 journeys. Three Oaks, Winchelsea and Beaulieu Road were others with fewer than 20,000 journeys. There were no others with more than 15 million journeys. Clapham Junction remains the busiest interchange station by a considerable margin, with 20,404,411 passengers changing trains. The mostly commonly-made journeys on the Southern Electric were:

Victoria - Gatwick Airport	5,455,484		Victoria - Bromley South	3,149,784
Waterloo - Clapham Junction	3,752,812		London Bridge - East Croydon	3,063,708
Victoria - East Croydon	3,677,714		Waterloo - Wimbledon	2,556,004
Waterloo - Surbiton	3,605,796		Waterloo - Guildford	2,236,816
Waterloo - Woking	3,284,244		Waterloo - Richmond	2,110,088

## 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.

P8&9	12 October to 8 November	MAA to 8 November	9 November to 6 December	MAA to 6 December
GB	61.61%	66.46%	58.96%	66.54%
SWR	56.91% (13 <sup>th</sup> )	64.02% (13 <sup>th</sup> )	53.98% (14 <sup>th</sup> )	64.66% (13 <sup>th</sup> )
GTR	64.43% (9 <sup>th</sup> )	67.60% (9 <sup>th</sup> )	61.48% (9 <sup>th</sup> )	67.69% (9 <sup>th</sup> )
SE	61.78% (11 <sup>th</sup> )	65.59% (12 <sup>th</sup> )	61.03% (10 <sup>th</sup> )	66.25% (12 <sup>th</sup> )

The results show the usual decline in performance during the autumn, because of poor adhesion. It is of note that South Western Railway has significantly worse performance than Govia and Southeastern, when it really should be best. It has a less complicated suburban network, with many grade-separated junctions. The extended journey times recently on the West of England line do not affect the performance data. A revised timetable was published, so punctuality is measured against that, not the normal schedule.

**Buffer collision at London Bridge:** The Rail Accident Investigation Branch has published a report into an incident at London Bridge on 13 December 2024. The 14:50 from Victoria, a pair of class 377 units, collided with the buffer stops at about 2.3 mph, pushing them back by 3 metres. RAIB found that the driver was fatigued and had had a microsleep after the train had entered the platform at the correct speed. As the train had slowed appropriately, none of the safety devices intervened to prevent the collision. RAIB considered that Govia Thameslink Railway did not adequately address driver fatigue when preparing rosters and even less so when making short-term alterations to them. It was not fully complying with guidance issued by the Office of Rail and Road on managing fatigue and there was undue reliance on systems no longer considered to be adequate on their own. The driver had worked a significant number of rest days and that had not been adequately managed. GTR is recommended to review and improve its fatigue management system and RAIB says this may apply to other operators. RAIB notes that modern vigilance monitoring devices can identify when a driver's level of attention is significantly decreased and such a system has been fitted to Croydon trams. Recent standards for new trains require passive provision for fitting such equipment, but not for the system to be installed.

**Tuesday 25 November:** A track defect resulted in the line between Reading and Wokingham being closed shortly after 11:00 for about three hours. Trains were cancelled or terminated at Bracknell or Wokingham. A signalling problem at Brockenhurst caused delays and cancellations during the evening. The 22:20 Southampton to Brighton collided with a bicycle and road signs placed on the line at Angmering by vandals. The train was able to run empty to Lovers Walk during the night. Two teenagers were arrested.

**Wednesday 26 November:** The line was blocked for about two hours after the 10:04 from Orpington was involved in a fatality at Penge East. Trains were diverted via Catford.

**Friday 28 November:** Signalling problems between Rowlands Castle, Warblington and Havant caused delays for most of the day, with some Southern services terminating at Barnham, Bognor Regis or Chichester. SWR trains mostly ran as

booked, but up to an hour late. The 15:00 from Waterloo was diverted via Winchester. A signalling problem at Horsham during the afternoon added to the disruption.

**Saturday 29 November:** Defective track at South Croydon and separate signalling problems at Horley (on the fast lines) and Gatwick Airport (on the slow lines) caused significant disruption throughout the day. The usual services were suspended, Gatwick Express, Bedford and Three Bridges via Redhill, Victoria and Reigate and Victoria and Eastbourne terminating and starting there. There were extensive delays to other trains. On top of that, early in the morning a car was abandoned on Ferring level crossing, between Goring-by-Sea and Angmering, after hitting the barriers. Services were suspended until 08:00. The 07:12 Littlehampton to Victoria was diverted via Crawley. A traction power failure resulted in there being no trains between Weymouth and Dorchester south between arrival of the 07:35 from Waterloo, slightly late at 10:32 and departure of the 18:00 from Weymouth at 18:08. Great Western services were subject to delays. The 10:46 West Croydon to Highbury & Islington terminated at Sydenham, because of a traction power problem. All London Overground services through Sydenham were cancelled until after 13:00. There were no trains from East Grinstead between the 15:06 and 20:06, because of a track defect. Trains terminated and started at Hurst Green.

**Sunday 30 November:** There was a limited service to and from Portsmouth Harbour from midday, because of a signalling failure.

**Monday 1 December:** Continuing signalling problems resulted in there being no trains at Portsmouth Harbour until 15:30, when a limited service started. Trains terminated and started at Portsmouth & Southsea, Fratton, Fareham, Chichester or Bognor Regis. Many were delayed. Early morning services were unable to use platforms 1 to 4 at Waterloo, because of a signalling failure. Shepperton trains were diverted via Richmond. The train to form the 07:03 from Uckfield, units 171807+728+806, failed prior to departure, but was able to return empty to Selhurst Depot half an hour later. That resulted in no departures from Uckfield between 06:33 and 08:33, with the 07:33 starting from Crowborough. London Overground services from Dalston Junction via Denmark Hill were diverted to Battersea Park, instead of Clapham Junction, for three hours from 10:30, because of a signalling problem. A points failure at Dartford and a signalling problem at City Thameslink disrupted afternoon and evening peak services. Thameslink services between Bedford and Three Bridges via Redhill and to East Grinstead, Orpington and Rainham were cancelled. The 13:35 Waterloo to Weymouth was delayed for an hour near Wool, while the crew removed a tree from the line, and terminated at Dorchester South. The 14:05 from Waterloo terminated at Poole and the 14:35 was delayed by about half an hour. A door on the 15:57 Kingston Loop train, unit 701018, could not be made to close at Wimbledon. The train was blocking the down slow line for over an hour, before it could be moved to Wimbledon Depot. Following suburban trains had to be diverted via the down fast line, resulting in delays. During the evening trees fell onto the line between Datchet and Windsor, at Southbourne and between Brighton and Lewes.

**Tuesday 2 December:** A problem with a set of points resulted in platform 4 at Portsmouth Harbour being out of use all day. Southern services were cut back to Portsmouth & Southsea or Fratton.

**Wednesday 3 December:** Early morning services were disrupted by over-running engineering work between Bexhill and St Leonards and at Waterloo, where platforms 12 to 24 were out of use until after 06:00. The 08:22 Guildford to Waterloo terminated at Hershams, because of a traction failure on units 455729 + 455871. The train was able to depart empty to Waterloo at 09:33.

**Thursday 4 December:** A points failure at Chichester prevented trains running from Barnham from 05:50 until 07:30, resulting in services being delayed or cancelled until early afternoon. The Hayes line was closed for over two hours after the 05:11 to Charing Cross was involved in a fatality between Lower Sydenham and Catford Bridge. A signalling problem on the southbound line at City Thameslink caused major disruption though the afternoon and evening. The standard arrangements for thinning the service were made, with cancellations including trains between Bedford and Three Bridges via Redhill and East Grinstead and Orpington peak services. The Rainham service was reduced to a shuttle from Gravesend.

**Friday 5 December:** Ice on the conductor rails between Dorchester and Poole caused significant disruption during the morning, with several trains becoming stranded. The line was closed for about 1½ hours after a person was struck by the 10:03 from Strood at Snodland.

**Saturday 6 December:** The 06:15 Dover Priory to Victoria failed following departure, after losing shoegear. The traction power tripped out in the Dover area, causing the 06:00 from Ashford also to become stranded. There was serious disruption to services at Dover for the rest of the morning, with trains terminating short at Folkestone Central or Shepherds Well, diverted via Canterbury West or badly delayed. The 10:37 from St Albans was diverted via Mitcham Junction after a tree fell onto the down line at Haydons Road, as were following trains until the 14:37. Up trains were able to run as booked. There were no Southern services to Beckenham Junction after the 16:14 from London Bridge, with later

trains terminating and starting at Birkbeck. This was because no station staff were available to assist with dispatch. The 18:23 Waterloo to Basingstoke lost time on the journey and terminated at Woking, because of a fault on the train.

**Sunday 7 December:** Trees were blown onto the line between Amberley and Pulborough and near Chilham late in the afternoon. The 17:01 Portsmouth Harbour to Victoria was diverted via Hove and other trains were delayed. Trains from Minster to Ashford were cancelled or diverted via Dover until 21:00. The 17:16 Victoria to Hastings hit a tree at Mountfield, resulting in the line being closed. It was able to run empty to West Marina about four hours later. The 18:30 from Hastings was detained at Battle for three hours. Other services terminated short or were cancelled entirely. The line was closed for about two hours after the 20:36 Victoria to Portsmouth Harbour struck a person near Crawley.

**Monday 8 December:** Yet another signalling failure at City Thameslink caused cancellations and delays from 08:00 for the rest of the day. There was significant disruption after a body was found on the line at Wimbledon during the afternoon. All lines were blocked and trains in the area were delayed by up to two hours. Numerous services were cancelled or terminated short, but it was possible to divert some main line trains via Chertsey. The 15:15 Portsmouth Harbour to Waterloo hit a tree between Milford and Godalming.

**Tuesday 9 December:** There were delays after the 06:51 Reading to Gatwick Airport failed at Wokingham. Fortunately, the unit was able to return empty to Reading Depot as soon as 07:20. Trees blew onto the line at Chandlers Ford during the afternoon and between Brockenhurst and Lymington early in the evening. A points failure at Portcreek Junction about 17:00 caused serious disruption for the rest of the day, with many cancellations and serious delays. The 16:57 Portsmouth Harbour to Brighton and 17:07 Portsmouth & Southsea to Waterloo both became stranded and had to set back wrong line to Fratton.

**Wednesday 10 December:** An intermittent signalling fault at Charing Cross caused disruption throughout the day, with periodic lack of access to platforms 1 to 3. Some trains were diverted to Cannon Street or Victoria, with others subject to delays. There were delays to Thameslink services from midafternoon onwards, because of a signalling fault at Borough Market Junction. A track fault at Higham resulted in all Thameslink services to and from Rainham being cancelled after 19:00. Most did not even run as short workings. Southeastern highspeed services were also cancelled, but some late evening trains were diverted via Ashford.

**Thursday 11 December:** An engineer's possession of the fast lines between Battersea Pier Junction and Selhurst over-ran, because a road rail vehicle failed at Balham. The lines did not re-open until about 08:00. With all trains having to use the slow lines, there were delays and Gatwick Express and Reigate services were cancelled. Power car 43013 on Network Rail's new measurement train hit ballast near Wilton on a 05:53 trip from Reading to Exeter and suffered a damaged fuel tank. It returned to Salisbury, where repairs were carried out, and ran direct to Reading in the evening. There were further signalling problems at City Thameslink during the afternoon and evening.

**Friday 12 December:** A signalling problem at Gillingham delayed evening services.

**Saturday 13 December:** A signalling failure at Ash Vale meant that there were no trains via Camberley between the 05:58 and 10:30 from Aldershot.

**Monday 15 December:** Thameslink services terminated and started at Gillingham during the morning peak, because a signalling problem prevented use of the bay platform at Rainham.

**Tuesday 16 December:** The morning peak did not go well. There were no trains via West Norwood from 06:50, because of an axle counter failure. West Croydon trains were diverted via Selhurst and others were cancelled. A limited service resumed about 10:30, but cancellations continued for the rest of the morning. The 06:00 Rainham to Luton failed to switch from DC to AC at Farringdon and after some delay retired empty to the loop between Blackfriars and Metropolitan Junction. The line was closed at Kingston after a person was struck by the 07:30 from Waterloo. Shepperton trains were diverted via Richmond and loop services terminated and started at Strawberry Hill. Normal working resumed about 10:45. There was also a signalling problem at Lewisham that caused delays during the morning peak.

**Wednesday 17 December:** A multi-purpose vehicle returning overnight to Tonbridge failed near Pluckley. An assisting locomotive was sent from Tonbridge, but experienced brake problems after coupling to the MPV, so the train did not reach Tonbridge until 09:00. While the line was blocked some up trains used the down line from Ashford to Headcorn, where a signalling failure caused added complications. Others were diverted via Maidstone East or were cancelled. A fractured crossover at Bickley Junction put the up slow line out of use all day. The stopping service between Victoria and Orpington was reduced to half-hourly and some Thameslink peak services to and from Orpington were cancelled. A track circuit failure at Lewisham prevented trains running to and from Nunhead. The 06:31 from Dartford was diverted to Cannon Street and subsequent trains were cancelled. Normal working resumed with the 08:47 from Crayford and 09:03 from Victoria. The 19:00 from Waterloo failed at Portsmouth & Southsea, blocking the line to Portsmouth Harbour for about 40 minutes. Following trains terminated in the low level platforms or at Fratton.

**Thursday 18 December:** A signalling fault required all up trains to use the slow line from Byfleet to Hampton Court Junction from 10:45 until late evening, though many ran slow line from Woking. No up trains called at Walton-on-Thames, Hersham or Esher and local services from Basingstoke ran non-stop from Woking to Surbiton. The 13:13 Brighton to Southampton hit a tree at Swanwick and the line was blocked for the rest of the afternoon. Southern services to Southampton were diverted to Bognor Regis and SWR trains between Portsmouth and Southampton were diverted via Eastleigh. Great Western services were already suspended south of Salisbury, because of flooding between Laverstock and Dean. A tree also came down onto the line at Pirbright Junction during the afternoon. A power failure at Effingham Junction late in the afternoon caused all but a few trains to be diverted via Woking for the rest of the day.

**Friday 19 December:** The 14:16 Sutton to St Albans was detained at Mitcham Junction with a fault and eventually departed empty for Cricklewood Sidings at 16:35. Meantime, up trains were diverted via West Croydon and Selhurst. The 22:53 Waterloo to Alton terminated at Brookwood, because of a serious assault on board. Fortunately, an off-duty policeman was travelling on the train and able to make an arrest.

**Saturday 20 December:** The 17:33 from Woking, units 450103+450077, terminated at Vauxhall, because of a problem with the doors.

**Monday 22 December:** An embarrassing incident was observed at Waterloo during the morning. The 09:47 from Salisbury, unit 159019, terminated in platform 6, instead of 10 as booked. It was to depart as the 11:50 to Salisbury. The signaller appears to have overlooked this, because the 10:41 from Shepperton, unit 701025, entered platform 6, as booked at 11:34. The driver of the Shepperton train stopped it well short of 159019 and passengers alighted via a single door in the leading coach. 701025 was then moved to the South Sidings, allowing the Salisbury train to depart ten minutes late. While 701025 was stopped partly blocking the station throat some short-notice platform alterations were required, with incoming trains subject to delay.



Two trains in the same platform. Oh dear! Photo: Stuart Hicks

## AROUND THE REGION

**National Railway Heritage Awards:** The renovation of the historic LBSCR tile maps at Victoria and the conservation work at Richmond station were both winners at the 2025 National Railway Heritage Awards. Commended entries included renovation of Battersea Park platform canopy, Bishopstone toilets, Blackheath station, London Road Guildford toilets and arches at Crucifix Lane, London Bridge. The work at Richmond has also won a Richmond Society Award for a distinguished contribution to Richmond.

**East Peckham:** These sidings, between Beltring and Yalding, have returned to use. Since 26 November fly ash has been received from Drax power station, for use in manufacturing building blocks. Trains are worked by GB Railfreight, inward via Paddock Wood and outward via Strood.

**Charing Cross:** A plaque has been erected at the station to commemorate the six people who died when the original arched roof collapsed on 5 December 1905. This has been done at the initiative of a great-grandson of one of the deceased. A defective weld in a tie rod fractured causing the collapse of the south end of the roof. Working decks were temporarily suspended from the roof, in connection with repairs. The additional weight would not have been a problem if the tie rod had been sound. Thrust imposed by the collapsing roof caused the west wall of the station to fall outwards onto the Avenue Theatre. The arched roof was replaced by a ridge and furrow one.

**Barnes:** A commemorative event was held at Barnes on 2 December, marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the train crash there. A plaque was unveiled in memory of the 13 people who died and the 41 who were injured. Railway Chaplain Christopher Henley led a service and a one minute silence to remember the victims. Among those present were the local Member of Parliament and the nephew of one of those who died.

**Chiswick:** The station footbridge is being replaced. The old one was removed over the weekend of 6/7 December.

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