**Hogrider 161 (Spring 2020)**

**South Hampshire Rail Users’ Group Newsletter**

**Foreword**

**(1) With the coronavirus pandemic, there is even less certainty about day-to-day rail services or their future development.**

**This issue attempts to mop up news affecting South Hampshire during the moratorium.**

**It is in three parts.**

**Part 1 looks at developments before the pandemic.**

**Part 2 attempts to outline briefly the reduced service operating, as in early April, as a result of the pandemic. This is just for illustrative purposes for anyone planning essential travel. Please always check before travel.**

**Part 3 looks at miscellaneous issues.**

**It has been clear for some time that the government wants to move away from rail franchises as we know them. All franchises were suspended from 23rd March until at least September and replaced by management contracts.**

**In January, the Department for Transport found that the SWR franchise was not sustainable in the long term, and might be replaced by a management contract or public sector operator. A new Managing Director (Mark Hopwood) has been appointed.**

**From 1st April, GWR was given a 3-year direct award. Management of Romsey, Mottisfont & Dunbridge, and Dean stations transferred from GWR to SWR.**

**Completion of the Williams review is now further delayed until the summer.**

**So, for now, a ‘stay well’ message to our followers and everyone in the rail industry. We hope to be back when greater clarity is restored.**

**PART 1 – BEFORE THE PANDEMIC**

**South Western Railway Developments**

**Improved trains**

The internal refurbishment of the Desiro fleets, which operate the majority of SWR electric train services in Hampshire, is complete. External repainting will take three and a half years. The final livery is exceptionally user-friendly, with clear information markings alongside doors and the familiar yellow line above first class.

The fully refurbished Wessex Electric trains have started to restore a sense of pride to the Waterloo-Guildford-Portsmouth line. Eight of the18 restored units were in operation by early February.

These were introduced on the following services on Mondays to Fridays: 06.43/07.14/10.15/10.45/11.45/14.45/15.15/16.15/19.15 Portsmouth Harbour-Waterloo; 08.00/08.30/09.30/12.30/13.00/14.00/17.00/17.30 Waterloo-Portsmouth Harbour; 17.15 Waterloo-Portsmouth & Southsea; 05.45 Poole-Waterloo; 06.51 Southampton Airport-Waterloo; 18.48/21.05 Waterloo-Poole.

**January 2020 timetable changes**

There was another round of minor tweaks instead of the radical improvements promised at the start of the franchise in 2017.

A second much faster (approximate 1967 timings) Sunday evening service from Poole to Waterloo was introduced, with trains starting at 16.18/18.18, and calling at Bournemouth at 16.31/18.31 and Southampton Central at 17.00/19.00, with arrivals at Clapham Junction at 18.02/20.02 and London Waterloo at 18.13/20.13. This allows 7-minute connections at Southampton Central for passengers from all stations from Pokesdown to Totton. In the opposite direction, a new 22.35 Waterloo-Poole extended half-hourly Southampton line Sunday departures from Waterloo through to 23.05.

[Outside South Hampshire, but one change which we have argued for is that Sunday evening trains from Waterloo to Salisbury have started calling at Basingstoke, with much improved connections for Andover and Salisbury passengers off the Cross Country trains from Manchester]

No such improvements for passengers travelling from the South Coast to the West of England on Sundays. Live in Salisbury, and you can reach Exeter at 08.43. Live in Southampton and you can’t get there until 12.42.

**In a peculiar case of the tail wagging the dog**, all Sunday Romsey-Eastleigh-Southampton-Salisbury trains have been scheduled to call at Mottisfont & Dunbridge and Dean. The number of passenger entries or exits at both stations averages about two per train (based on ORR data for 2017-18). Yet the Sunday stops destroy potential connections into services to Exeter. Although January’s changes resulted in all these trains going through to Salisbury on Mondays to Saturdays, the penultimate service on Sundays continues to terminate at Romsey. Passengers from Southampton therefore need to leave at 21.10 to catch the final Salisbury-Exeter service at 22.47. They could leave at 22.10 if it were extended to run non-stop from Romsey to Salisbury.

**Cross Country Developments**

**December 2019 timetable changes**

The basic service pattern remained unchanged, with some generally very minor retiming.

However, pathing changes north of Birmingham allowed several trains to be significantly accelerated. The 07.56 Southampton Central-Newcastle on Mondays to Fridays, and 07.49, 09.47 and 15.47 Southampton Central-Newcastle on Saturdays have all been accelerated by between 28 and 31 minutes, with no loss of intermediate stops.

**Planned capacity increase from December 2020**

Extra coaches are planned to come into service on certain trains, including on the South Coast route via Basingstoke, from the December 2020 timetable change.

 **Great Western Railway Developments**

**Thames Turbo trains now the norm**

While GWR services have been widely recast following electrification from Paddington to Cardiff, Chippenham and Newbury, services to Southampton, Portsmouth and Brighton are virtually unchanged.

Services on the Cardiff-Portsmouth Harbour route are mostly lengthened, being formed of second-hand 5-coach Thames Turbo stock, although some are shorter. More recently, these trains have started running through Hampshire to Brighton.

The 5-coach trains are formed of a 3-car air-conditioned unit and 2-car non-air- conditioned unit. Virtually all seating is 2+3 aside. Turbo trains are a diesel version of the electric Networker units built for outer suburban services on South Eastern. It will presumably be argued that not many passengers make the full five-and-a-half hour journey between Brighton and Great Malvern.

**With no access between the two units, all catering facilities have been discontinued.** The air-conditioned units are usually at the Portsmouth end of 5-car trains between Bristol and Portsmouth and at the Cardiff end between Bristol and Cardiff. [Trains reverse at Bristol Temple Meads station]

Cardiff, meanwhile, is undergoing a huge house building programme which will deliver over 40,000 new homes and increase the size of the city by 30 per cent, with a population greater than the City of Bristol. Case for a more attractive service?

**December timetable changes**

Our suggestion in the franchise consultation of later services between Portsmouth and Bristol has been realised, though only on Mondays to Fridays. The 17.02 Brighton-Bristol Temple Meads (18.43 from Southampton Central) is extended to Bristol Parkway, returning as a new 21.21 Bristol Parkway-Portsmouth & Southsea. This gives a useful later service from Salisbury 23.02, Romsey 23.21, and Southampton Central 23.33 to Fareham, Fratton and Portsmouth & Southsea.

A balancing service to Bristol is provided by extension of the 21.23 Portsmouth Harbour-Westbury (Mondays-Fridays) to Bristol Temple Meads. This service continues to run via Eastleigh and Southampton Airport Parkway.

The Cosham curfew, whereby GWR trains don’t call there after 20.00, apparently because of anti-social behaviour in the distant past, persists!

There were two other significant changes. The 08.30 (Saturdays) Southampton Central–Worcester Foregate Street is extended to Great Malvern like the corresponding Monday-Friday service. The 17.41 Cheltenham Spa-Southampton Central (Mondays-Fridays) via Swindon and Melksham has been cut back to start from Gloucester at 17.50.

**Southern Developments**

**Planned timetable changes from May 2020**

Southern plans changes during a two-year project to rebuild Gatwick Airport station. In particular, the Gatwick Express service would be reduced to half-hourly (the alternate services which run between Victoria and Brighton would remain; those which start or terminate at the airport would be withdrawn).

The Victoria-Brighton trains would be diverted south of Haywards Heath to serve Eastbourne/Hastings, and the Victoria-Littlehampton trains would lose their Eastbourne/Hastings portion.

One consequence is that Clapham Junction would no longer have regular direct Brighton trains, though the Littlehampton trains would continue to link Clapham Junction and Hove.

**Infrastructure**

**Southampton Container Port**

Lengthening of sidings at the back of Redbridge station, to allow longer container trains to operate, was proceeding early in the year.

**Second Hampshire derailment through rails being too far apart**

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) decided to produce a "safety digest", instead of a full report, after a special passenger train from Waterloo to the Fawley branch was derailed on the Southampton Eastern Docks branch on 5.11.2016. It stated that it did not always investigate less serious rail incidents if the circumstances were covered by a previous investigation or existing rules.

On 28.1.2020, a container train was partly derailed on departure from Eastleigh station. On this occasion there was considerable damage to infrastructure. Services on the Waterloo main line were severely disrupted for almost a month, much longer than after the three-train Clapham Junction disaster of 1988.

Both the 2016 and 2020 incidents were caused by the rails being too far apart, after securing clips fell out. This inevitably suggests a poor inspection and maintenance regimes. Various RAIB reports have found that Network Rail’s modus operandi can be disjointed and that there is too little corporate memory. A stronger focus at the top must be urgently required.

**PART 2: SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC**

**BROAD GUIDANCE EXTRACTED FROM INTERNET SITES, PLEASE ALWAYS CHECK BEFORE TRAVEL**

**Reduced rail services operate in South Hampshire, but they should be used only for essential travel. A broad outline of the service levels, as in early April, is below. While considerable effort has been made to achieve accuracy, we cannot guarantee that no errors have crept in, and services may in any case be subject to change at short notice. Note also that engineering works continue to disrupt services in late evening and at weekends.**

**Cross Country**

The two-hourly services between Southampton Central and Newcastle, Edinburgh or York are suspended.

The hourly services between Bournemouth/Southampton Central and Birmingham/Manchester continue. These include the associated 06.43 (Monday-Friday) / 06.44 (Saturday) Nottingham-Bournemouth train, and 06.25 Bournemouth-Newcastle Saturday train.

**Great Western Railway**

South Hampshire services are severely curtailed, with none towards Great Malvern.

On Mondays-Fridays, a two-hourly service operates between Cardiff Central and Portsmouth Harbour. Trains stop at additional stations between Bradford-on-Avon and Bristol Temple Meads. Departures from Portsmouth Harbour (with Southampton Central departure times in brackets) to Cardiff Central are at 07.21 (08.10), 09.23 (10.11), 11.23 (12.11), 13.23 (14.11), 15.23 (16.10), 17.23 (18.10), 19.23 (20.10), and to Bristol Temple Meads at 21.23 (22.22). Return times from Cardiff Central are at 07.28, 09.27, 11.30, 13.30, 15.30, 17.30 and 19.30, with an additional service from Bristol Temple Meads at 05.51.

Saturday services are similar, but without the 21.23 Portsmouth Harbour-Bristol Temple Meads. Sunday departures from Portsmouth Harbour (with Southampton Central departure times in brackets) to Cardiff Central are at 09.08 (09.56), 11.08 (11.57) and every two hours to 19.08 (19.57). Return services from Cardiff Central at 11.13, 13.13, 15.13, 17.13 and 19.13.

**Southern**

Southern is running a similar pattern of service across South Hampshire seven days a week, though with a later start on Sundays. Very broadly, the service is as follows on Mondays to Fridays.

The Southampton Central-Horsham-Gatwick Airport-London Victoria and the Portsmouth & Southsea-Littlehampton services are suspended. An hourly service operates on the Portsmouth Harbour-Horsham-Gatwick Airport-London Victoria route.

Hourly Coastway services operate between Brighton and Southampton Central and between Brighton and Portsmouth Harbour. At Brighton the departures switch slots: to Southampton Central on the hour, and now calling at all stations as far as Chichester; to Portsmouth Harbour on the half hour and now calling at all stations except Hilsea. Services to Brighton generally leave Portsmouth Harbour at 14-past and Southampton Central at 30-past.

Gatwick Express services to and from London Victoria are suspended.

Services from Southampton Central to Brighton are at 06.30, 07.30, 08.21, 09.30 and hourly to 18.30, then 19.23, 20.28, 21.30, then 22.30 and 22.58 to Littlehampton. Last return from Brighton at 21.00.

Services from Portsmouth Harbour to Brighton are at 06.14 and hourly to 21.14, and 22.01, then at 22.14 and 23.01 to Littlehampton. Last train from Brighton to Portsmouth Harbour at 21.30. Services from Portsmouth Harbour to London Victoria are at 06.57, 08.01 and hourly to 21.01. Last train from Brighton to Portsmouth Harbour at 21.30. Services from London Victoria to Portsmouth Harbour generally leave at 33-past; last service at 20.33. There is also a 21.16 London Victoria-Portsmouth Harbour via Hove (depart 22.19).

**South Western Railway**

Mondays-Fridays Weekend summaries not attempted because significant disruptions from engineering work still ongoing.

The semi-fast Waterloo-Bournemouth trains run hourly. Westbound, trains generally leave Waterloo on the hour, and Southampton Central at 28-past. Return times are 18-past from Bournemouth and 56-past from Southampton Central. These trains call at Clapham Junction, Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Eastleigh, Southampton Airport Parkway, Southampton Central, Brockenhurst, New Milton, Christchurch, Pokesdown, Bournemouth**. (oddly, not Totton, which is the only town on the route not to have a regular London service)**.

Early morning services from Southampton Central to Waterloo with London arrival times in brackets: 05.12 (07.09), 05.55 (07.23), 06.30 (08.03), 07.00 (08.27), 07.30 (08.52), 07.53 (09.22), then 08.56 and hourly. Last trains at 17.56, 18.30, 18.56, 20.30, 22.00. Departures from New Milton at 06.21, 06.51, 7.29, 08.33 and then hourly to 18.33, with last trains at 20.04 and 21.29. Departures from Totton at 06.46, 07.16, 07.42, and then an **extraordinary gap** until the first hourly connectional service to Southampton Central at 09.40; then hourly to 19.40 and another **extraordinary gap** until a direct Waterloo train at 21.52. Early departures from Eastleigh at 05.24, 06.08, 06.42, 07.12, 08.08 and then hourly to 19.08 and 22.12.

Evening services from Waterloo are at 16.35, 17.00, 17.35, 18.00, 18.35, 19.00, 20.00, 21.00 and 22.35. Trains on the hour are as the off-peak services, but the 17.00 and 18.00 do not call at Clapham Junction, and the 20.00 and 21.00 call at all stations west of Southampton Central, except Millbrook, Redbridge and Beaulieu Road. The 16.35 calls Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Southampton Airport, and terminates at Southampton Central; the 17.35, 18.35, and 22.35, are similar but the 17.35 and 18.35 miss Woking, and all three continue to Brockenhurst and Bournemouth.

First train from Winchester to Eastleigh and Southampton at 06.41; last train from Winchester to Eastleigh at 22.19 and to Southampton at 23.35. First train from Southampton to Eastleigh and Winchester at 05.12; last train at 22.00. First train from Eastleigh to Southampton at 06.51; last train at 22.22.

An hourly Southampton-Bournemouth service calls at all stations except Millbrook and Redbridge. Departures from Southampton Central (including several direct trains from London Waterloo at the beginning and end of the day) are: 06.21 (not Beaulieu Road); 07.05 (not Ashurst or Beaulieu Road);07.59; 09.00 (not Ashurst or Beaulieu Road); 09.55 and hourly to 17.55; 18.54 (not Beaulieu Road or Pokesdown); then all stations from Totton (except Beaulieu Road) at 19.55, 20.55, 21.27 and 22.30. No layover at Brockenhurst so westbound Totton-New Milton/Christchurch off-peak journeys about 25 minutes quicker than normal.

Return stopping services from Bournemouth to Southampton are at 06.04/06.34 (not Beaulieu Road); 07.00; 08.58 and hourly to 18.58; then (not Beaulieu Road) at 19.58, 21.12 and 22.12.

An hourly stopping service operates between Bournemouth and Weymouth. Departures from Bournemouth at 24-past and Weymouth at 03-past. Arrivals at Bournemouth at 03-past and Weymouth at 20-past.

Departures from Portsmouth Harbour to Waterloo via Guildford, with London arrival times in brackets: 05.50 (07.44), 06.15 (07.57), 06.19 (08.16), 07.14 (08.55), 07.19 (09.19), 07.45 (09.27) and then hourly, 08.15 (10.13) and then hourly. Last services at 18.15, 19.19, 20.19, 20.45 and 21.19. Return services from Waterloo at 30-past (semi-fast) and 45-past (stopping). Last services at 19.45, 20.45, 21.45, 22.30 and 22.45.

Southampton Central-Fratton stopping service: 07.17, 08.44 and then hourly to 22.44. Return services from Fratton at 07.42 and hourly to 21.42.

Trains run hourly from Basingstoke to Portsmouth Harbour via Eastleigh from 07.00 to 22.00. Departures from Portsmouth Harbour are at 05.00, 05.43, 07.55, 08.59 and then hourly to 19.59.

Half hourly Brockenhurst-Lymington service runs, but suspended 10.00-11.00 and 20.00-21.00, with last train from Brockenhurst at 22.18.

Trains depart from Romsey (clockwise via Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh and Southampton Central) at 08.07, 09.07, 12.07, 13.07, 16.07, 17.07, 18.07 and 22.07. The 09.07, 13.07, 18.07 and 22.07 run to Salisbury, with the remainder just completing the circle back to Romsey via Redbridge. The only services in the opposite direction are at 06.50, 10.56, 14.56 and 20.56 from Salisbury. The trains which just complete the circle to Romsey make a further journey clockwise via Chandlers Ford. This means that services from Southampton Central to Chandlers are at 07.35, 11.35, 15.35 and 21.35 (via Eastleigh), and 08.37, 12.37, 16.37 and 17.37 (via Romsey)

GWR’s services at 07.21, 09.23, 11.23, 13.23, 15.23 and 17.23 from Portsmouth Harbour (via Southampton Central at 08.10, 10.11, 12.11, 14.11, 16.10 and 18.10) connect at Salisbury with trains to Exeter Central at 09.10, 11.10, 13.16, 15.10, 17.10 and 19.10). In the opposite direction, trains leave Exeter Central at 05.14, 09.01, 11.08, 13.08, 15.09, 17.09, and 19.08.

No SWR trains from Salisbury to Bristol or between Salisbury and Yeovil Junction via Westbury.

**PART 3 – MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES**

**South Hampshire – Devon**

**When, under normal service, it’s quicker via Westbury**

This is one of the routes for which no timetable leaflets exist, perhaps because erratic connections mean that it’s usually quicker to get from South Hampshire to the West by changing at Salisbury. The Salisbury-Exeter route (via Yeovil Junction) is covered by SWR’s timetable leaflet 20, which just shows Portsmouth Harbour and Southampton Central connections.

With December’s big GWR timetable revision there are more West of England trains serving Westbury, though the principal Paddington-Plymouth /Penzance trains generally run fast between Reading and Taunton.

**Ambitions to improve rail connectivity in the South Western peninsula seem to have stopped short of relieving the congested A31/A35 corridor. The motorway corridor west of Bristol has fast trains twice hourly; Paddington and Reading have fast West of England trains once or twice every hour; The Southampton-Portsmouth corridor, Britain’s seventh most populous built-up area (ONS data) has no direct services to the West.**

The following tables show services, following the December timetable change, where it was quicker to Exeter and beyond by changing at Westbury rather than Salisbury. The information was carefully checked against the published timetables for the period ending 16th May 2020. This is not a complete timetable for the routes shown.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Notes* |  |  | *A* | *B* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Days of operation* | *M-F* | *Sat* | *M-Sat* | *M-Sat* | *M-F* | *Sat* | *Sun* | *M-F* | *Sat* | *M-F* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Portsmouth Harbour | 06.01 |  |  |  |  |  | 19.08 | 19.23 | 19.23 | 20.23 |
| Southampton Central | 06.47 | 08.30 | 10.42 | 12.27 | 18.43 | 18.45 | 19.57 | 20.10 | 20.10 | 21.11 |
| Westbury | 07.47 | 09.35 | 11.40 | 13.35 | 19.39 | 19.44 | 20.56 | 21.09 | 21.10 | 22.09 |
| CHANGE HERE |
| Westbury | 08.21 | 09.53 | 11.54 | 13.53 | 20.08 | 20.21 | 21.20 | 21.17 | 21.21 | 22.21 |
| Castle Cary | 08.41 | 10.13 | 12.14 | 14.14 | 20.28 | 20.41 | 21.40 | 21.37 | 21.41 | 22.41 |
| Taunton | 09.03 | 10.35 | 12.35 | 14.36 | 20.49 | 21.03 | 22.03 | 21.58 | 22.03 | 23.04 |
| Tiverton Parkway | 09.16 | 10.47 |  |  | 21.02 | 21.15 | 22.13 | 22.11 | 22.15 | 23.17 |
| Exeter St David’s | 09.29 | 11.02 | 12.59 | 14.59 | 21.16 | 21.29 | 22.29 | 22.25 | 22.29 | 23.31 |
| Dawlish | 09.43 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 22.38 | 22.43 |  |
| Teignmouth | 09.48 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 22.43 | 22.48 |  |
| Newton Abbot | 09.55 |  |  |  | 21.36 | 21.50 | 22.50 | 22.50 | 22.56 | 23.52 |
| Torquay | 10.08 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Paignton | 10.15 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Totnes |  |  |  |  |  | 22.02 | 23.02 | 23.02 | 23.08 | 00.04 |
| Ivybridge |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 23.17 |  |  |
| Plymouth |  |  |  |  | 22.13 | 22.30 | 23.30 | 23.32 | 23.36 | 00.31 |

*A: On Saturdays departs from Westbury at 11.53 and Castle Cary at 12.13.*

*B: On Saturdays departs from Castle Cary at 14.13 and Taunton at 14.34.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Notes* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | *C* | D |  |
| *Days of operation* | *M-F* | *Sun* | *Sun* | *Sat* | *M-F* | *M-F* | *Sat* | *Daily* | *Daily* | *Sun* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Plymouth | 05.34 |  | 08.32 |  | 08.35 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ivybridge | 05.48 |  |  |  | 08.49 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Totnes | 06.02 |  | 08.59 |  | 09.03 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Paignton |  |  |  | 08.55 |  | 10.52 |  |  |  |  |
| Torquay |  |  |  | 09.01 |  | 10.59 |  |  |  |  |
| Newton Abbot | 06.15 |  | 09.12 | 09.14 | 09.16 | 11.12 |  |  |  |  |
| Teignmouth | 06.22 |  | 09.19 | 09.22 | 09.23 | 11.19 |  |  |  |  |
| Dawlish | 06.27 |  | 09.24 | 09.27 | 09.28 | 11.24 |  |  |  |  |
| Exeter St David’s | 06.51 | 08.34 | 09.38 | 09.42 | 09.41 | 11.38 | 11.43 | 13.40 | 15.38 | 17.40 |
| Tiverton Parkway | 07.06 | 08.49 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Taunton | 07.17 | 09.00 | 10.00 | 10.04 | 10.03 | 12.00 | 12.05 | 14.02 | 16.00 | 18.02 |
| Castle Cary | 07.38 | 09.20 | 10.20 | 10.26 | 10.24 | 12.20 | 12.27 | 14.23 | 16.22 | 18.23 |
| Westbury | 07.58 | 09.41 | 10.43 | 10.47 | 10.44 | 12.47 | 12.48 | 14.46 | 16.44 | 18.45 |
| CHANGE HERE |
| Westbury | 08.05 | 10.00 | 11.01 | 11.02 | 11.05 | 13.03 | 13.02 | 15.03 | 17.03 | 19.01 |
| Southampton Central | 09.02 | 11.03 | 12.03 | 12.03 | 12.02 | 14.01 | 14.03 | 16.02 | 18.02 | 20.03 |
| Portsmouth Harbour | 09.56 | 11.51 | 12.51 | 12.50 | 12.51 | 14.50 | 14.50 | 16.52 | 18.54 | 20.50 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Notes* |  |  | PZ |
| *Days of operation* | *M-F* | *Sun* | *Sun* |
|  |  |  |  |
| Plymouth | 16.49 | 17.46 | 19.45 |
| Ivybridge | 17.03 |  |  |
| Totnes | 17.17 | 18.12 | 20.15 |
| Paignton |  |  |  |
| Torquay |  |  |  |
| Newton Abbot | 17.30 | 18.25 | 20.28 |
| Teignmouth |  |  |  |
| Dawlish |  |  |  |
| Exeter St David’s | 17.51 | 18.50 | 20.49 |
| Tiverton Parkway | 18.05 |  | 21.04 |
| Taunton | 18.17 | 19.12 | 21.15 |
| Castle Cary | 18.38 |  | 21.36 |
| Westbury | 18.58 | 19.53 | 21.56 |
| CHANGE HERE |
| Westbury | 19.05 | 19.59 | 22.05 |
| Southampton Central | 20.02 | 21.03 | 23.05 |
| Portsmouth Harbour | 20.50 | 21.49 | 23.50 |

*C: On Saturdays departs from Exeter at 13.43, Taunton at 14.05, Castle Cary 14.27, and arrives Westbury at 14.47. On Sundays departs from Exeter at 13.39, and arrives Westbury at 14.42. Connection departs from Westbury 15.02 on Saturdays and Sundays, arriving at Southampton Central at 16.03 on Saturdays and 16.04 on Sundays, and at Portsmouth Harbour at 16.50 on Saturdays and 16.51 on Sundays.*

*D: On Saturdays departs from Exeter at 15.43, Taunton at 16.05, Castle Cary 16.27, and arrives Westbury at 16.47. On Sundays departs from Exeter at 15.40, Taunton 16.02, Castle Cary 16.23, and arrives at Westbury at 16.42. Connection departs from Westbury 17.02 on Saturdays and 17.01 on Sundays, arriving at Southampton Central at 18.03 on Saturdays and Sundays, and at Portsmouth Harbour at 18.50 on Saturdays and 18.53 on Sundays.*

*PZ: Starts from Penzance at 17.50, calling at St Erth 17.58, Camborne 18.10, Redruth 18.16, Truro 18.29, St Austell 18.45, Par 18.53, Bodmin Parkway 19.05, and Liskeard 19.18.*

*M-F: Mondays-Fridays; M-Sat: Mondays to Saturdays; Sat: Saturdays only; Sun: Sundays only.*

**Waterside Line reopening still possible but the economic downturn, and the longstanding decline in traffic growth at Totton station following Stagecoach’s service cuts, won’t help.**

The Waterside parishes are reportedly falling into line in supporting introduction of passenger train services from Marchwood, Hythe, and Hythe & Fawley Parkway (on the site of the former Hardley Halt).

**The built-up area to the west of Southampton Water has a population of around 60,000 inclusive of Totton. That’s much more than, for example, the population of Salisbury.** The environmental benefits on the congested and polluted main road into Southampton could be considerable.

That said, the artificially reduced demand at Totton hardly helps the case for the restoration of services to the smaller Waterside populations. While most Waterside custom would be towards Southampton, there are opportunities for leisure travel towards Bournemouth. Changing from a Hythe service to an hourly Poole train at Totton, and then having either to change again at Brockenhurst, or sit on a train parked at that station for 25 minutes, sounds singularly unattractive.

**‘Connectivity’ is a DfT buzzword, but it can mean fast journeys as well as direct services.**

Meanwhile, the westbound platform at Totton is to be made accessible for people with mobility restrictions. Hopefully this will include a ticket vending machine on that side of the station. The eastbound platform is accessible already.

Unfortunately, the train service at Totton is so poor that the potential number of disabled users is likely to be minimal.

**Time to drive the prospects for Waterside services by service improvements aimed at driving up custom at Totton?**

SHRUG’s Co-ordinator wrote to the Southern Daily Echo, which published the letter on 5th March:

“Great news that Totton’s rail station is to become accessible to disabled people. Pity that its services will be so inconvenient for them.

The station serves 30,000 people in Totton and a similar number in the Waterside parishes. Official estimates show numbers of passengers arriving or departing as having increased by 71.7% between 2001-02 and 2006-07, but only by a further 3.1% up to 2018-19.

The downturn is obviously due to the big timetable cuts and slowing introduced by previous operator South West Trains.

An hour’s gap appeared in the direct commuter service to London.

Decent journey times now generally depend on changing at Southampton or Brockenhurst – hardly ideal for disabled people.

Apart from during the Monday-Friday peaks and Sundays, the journey time from Waterloo increased from 81 to 116 minutes. By taking a faster train from London and changing at Southampton it should become 90 minutes, but is often 150 minutes because the ‘connection’ isn’t held.

Monday-Friday off-peak and Saturday journey times from Totton to New Milton have increased from 19 to 51 minutes, and to Christchurch from 26 to 60 minutes.

The poor hourly service also means long waits at Southampton for trains to many other destinations.

Travelling from Totton to Exeter before midday on a Sunday? It takes almost four hours, with a long detour via Basingstoke.

Current operator South Western Railway promised improvements, but Network Rail is resisting them because of teething problems with more complex service changes around Manchester and on the Thameslink route”.

It seems likely that the letter was noted by New Forest District Councillor (Totton North ward) Neville Penman. The Daily Echo of 10th March reported that he too considered disability access at Totton station as great news. He also hopes for a new shelter on the eastbound platform and new seating, hoping that “we can improve the footfall at the station and to our town”.

**Amendments to some late night and early morning South Western Railway services from13th December 2020**

**Our submission of 14/12/2019 in response to Network Rail’s consultation, and reply received from South Western Railway and Network Rail on 5th March 2020**

**POINTS SENT**

**“General**

In principle, reducing the operating hours of train services is contrary to passengers’ interests and the promises of service improvements which came with the SWR franchise.

We could not find similar consultations for other franchises, even though some main lines around London have limited all-night services. We recognise that double-tracked branch lines have little or no scope for services to switch tracks or divert to other routes, and that some London suburban areas have alternative night bus services, though these will involve longer journey times.

That said, the proposed different treatment of the South Western main routes and the main routes of other operators would suggest that the former have discrete problems, such as having been less-well maintained. It will be recalled that ‘gold-plating’ of lines in the Waterloo area was apparently abandoned when the second SWT franchise was reduced from twenty years to three through poor performance.

Major engineering works typically involve line closures through Saturday and Sunday or just Sunday. It is therefore unclear how closing lines for slightly longer periods on Sunday to Thursday nights will contribute much to enabling enhanced services to run on Friday and Saturday nights. The practical difference, surely, is that the proposal would result in substitute buses being needed only at weekends.

**Implications for the South Hampshire area**

The effects of the proposed changes for South Hampshire are limited. It seems that they can be summarised as follows:

21.10 Weymouth-Waterloo (Mondays-Saturdays), a service with an exceptionally large number of stops and long overall journey time, would start from Bournemouth. In addition, it would terminate at Woking on Mondays to Thursdays. The current 22.30 Southampton Central-Waterloo would start from Weymouth at 21.00. This would reach London at 00.08, about an hour earlier than the current 21.10.

**This would give a much better late service to Waterloo from Weymouth, Bournemouth and intermediate stations, plus Brockenhurst. However, the last service to Waterloo from intermediate stations between Bournemouth and Totton (except Brockenhurst) would be an hour earlier than currently on Mondays to Thursdays. Probably few passengers travel beyond Woking this late, and they could generally manage with an earlier last train.**

00.05 Waterloo-Bournemouth (Tuesday-Sunday mornings) would be retimed to 00.10 on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

**This looks tokenistic. It would seem better to depart at 00.05 all week and serve St Denys, a station convenient for a large area of eastern Southampton.**

00.50 (Mondays only) Waterloo-Portsmouth would be withdrawn, with passengers needing to use the 23.30 Sunday departure.

**This train is probably a legacy of various historic provisions designed with naval personnel particularly in mind. Presumably the navy has been consulted.**

01.05 Waterloo-Southampton Central (daily) would be withdrawn on Monday to Friday mornings. Passengers for stations from Winchester to Southampton Central would need to use the 23.05 on Sunday nights, and 00.05 (23.05 in the case of St Denys) on Tuesday to Friday mornings.

**This train is potentially a very useful safeguard for passengers arriving at other London termini on long-distance trains, especially when those trains are delayed. Also, it enables motorists who park and ride to reach most towns in populous Hampshire with a night time drive of no more than about 30 minutes. Difficult to see why bus replacements can’t continue to operate throughout the week as necessary, rather than just at weekends.**”

**REPLY FROM MARK HOPWOOD (MANAGING DIRECTOR SWR) AND MARK KILLICK (ROUTE MANAGING DIRECTOR, NETWORK RAIL)**

We are grateful to Mr Hopwood and Mr Killick for their constructive response, as below. It’s good that the 00.05 departure from Waterloo will run 7 days a week, and that there will at least be a bus from Waterloo to Southampton at 01.05 on nights when there is no train.

“Dear Denis,

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on the proposals to amend late night and early morning services from December 2020. We recognise that any timetable change can have a significant impact on our customers and the communities we serve, so it was important to receive your feedback. We would like to share with you how the comments we have received throughout the consultation have helped to shape our final proposals.

The consultation sought feedback on our proposals to remove a small number of late night/early morning services from Sunday through to Thursday to allow Network Rail more time to carry out essential maintenance work. By providing this additional time early in the week, we will also be able to introduce additional late-night services on busy Friday and Saturday evenings to cater for the growing number of late evening travellers.

By providing Network Rail with increased access to maintain the track we will help reduce the number of infrastructure faults resulting in a more reliable railway for everyone.

These performance benefits were identified by Sir Michael Holden as one of the recommendations following his review into performance on our network (https://www.southwesternrailway.com/other/about-us/independent-performance-review). He concluded that, “A package of changes along these lines would transform the access for maintenance, dramatically improve productivity and efficiency, and enable significant improvements in infrastructure reliability over time”.

The review recommended that there should be longer periods where no trains run on Sunday to Thursday nights in the suburban area. These changes would provide Network Rail with on average 45 minutes extra per night to carry out essential maintenance work (Sunday – Thursday) in the suburban area. This would also allow later trains to run on Friday and Saturday evenings without constraining critical maintenance work.

The feedback we received in relation to the proposals has been reviewed and we have considered how we can adjust our original plans to accommodate, where possible, the needs highlighted through the feedback. Below you will find our final proposals. However, the timetable change process is complex and involves discussions and approvals with stakeholders including the Department for Transport. Our timetable will be reviewed by Network Rail as part of the usual industry-standard timetable change evaluation, alongside the timetables of other operators who use the network.

This review is very technical, and it may be necessary to amend our plans following this. We expect the output of this review in the summer and when these changes are finalised, we will communicate the final timetable via our website so that customers can plan their journeys in advance of December 2020.

We recognise we may never please everybody, but we believe that we have created a timetable which will deliver improved performance through longer maintenance access in the suburban area Sunday – Thursday nights, as well as allowing us to provide additional services on Friday and Saturday nights. Attached is the passenger consultation response document which will be published on our website and emailed to all respondents of the consultation.

The introduction of enhanced midweek night access will have broad benefits to passengers. We believe that such a maintenance regime, by reducing defects, will enable a better performing railway for the overwhelming number of passengers who do not use these specific trains but suffer delays because their operation detracts from Network Rail’s ability to maintain the railway. In addition, it would enable more later trains to operate on Friday and Saturday night within the suburban area when there is greater demand. As these services should be able to operate in a manner not generally impacted upon by routine maintenance, passengers will have greater confidence in the published timetable and as such these services would be able to generate higher demand.

As part of the consultation process, an assessment of alternative travel options was made. For passengers affected by the changes within the suburban area, TfL’s night-bus network provides a comprehensive alternative network (https://tfl.gov.uk/maps/bus).

For Passengers who travel on the 00:27 Waterloo –Woking or 01:05 Waterloo – Southampton Central to destinations including and beyond West Byfleet and Woking, South Western Railway will therefore provide a rail replacement bus service.

Following your feedback SWR will keep the current departure time (0005) on Friday and Saturday nights. Coupled with the additional 0005 on Sunday nights the last mainline departure to Southampton Central will be consistent on all nights of the week.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Hopwood Mark Killick

**FINAL PROPOSALS**

Following the feedback from the consultation, the following changes will be introduced in December 2020, including the new later night services on Friday and Saturday nights; initially the package of changes will be done on a trial basis:

1) Loss of last travel opportunity from Waterloo. To cover the withdrawal of the 00:27 Waterloo – Woking and 01:05 Waterloo –Southampton Central, South Western Railway will introduce two rail replacement bus services setting down only. The services will run as follows on Sunday –Thursday nights:

• 01:05 Waterloo – Woking, calling at: Clapham Junction (pick-up only), West Byfleet, and Woking.

• 01:05 Waterloo – Southampton Central, calling at: Farnborough, Fleet, Basingstoke, Winchester, Eastleigh, Southampton Airport Parkway, St Denys, and Southampton Central.

2) The last mainline service on a Sunday night is very early. During the consultation concern was raised the last mainline service from Waterloo was significantly earlier than current, and earlier than on weekday nights. SWR will introduce an additional 00:05 from Waterloo to Southampton Central, this means the last mainline departure is the same as Monday to Thursday nights. The last train services from Waterloo will be as follows Sunday night:

• For Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Eastleigh, Southampton Airport Parkway, Southampton Central at 00:05

3) Retiming the 0005 to Bournemouth by 5 minutes on Friday and Saturday nights is tokenistic

Concern was raised during the consultation that re-timing the 0005 to depart at 0010 on Friday and Saturday nights was tokenistic and could cause confusion leading to customers missing the service on other nights of the week. SWR will keep the current departure time (0005) on Friday and Saturday nights. Coupled with the additional 0005 on Sunday nights the last mainline departure to Southampton Central will be consistent on all nights of the week.

4) All other changes as originally proposed

All the changes as originally proposed in the consultation will be introduced from 13th December 2020, in addition to the rail replacement bus services as outlined above, and the alterations to last services from Waterloo on a Sunday night. These changes will be on a trial basis for at least one year and will be kept under review. We will monitor the impact of the changes on our passengers, and Network Rail’s use of the extra time to carry out essential maintenance work in the suburban area.”

**Acknowledgements / Contact details**

As always, thanks to everyone who has been kind enough to contact us. Without your support and input, this newsletter would be much less comprehensive. It is produced in good faith, based on reports and information from individuals and sources including the press and news websites.

Contributions are always welcome. We aim for accuracy at all times, because our good reputation depends on it. We do not use material which could be offensive or which appears unlikely to be correct.

We do not process information of a personal nature and, in view of GDPR, we will maintain our approach that the names of those who contribute news items or articles will be acknowledged in newsletters only where they have indicated that they consent to this. **So, when submitting articles or items for collation, please indicate if you would like them to be attributed to you**.

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