**Hogrider 162 (Autumn 2020)**

**South Hampshire Rail Users’ Group Newsletter**

**REVISED PANDEMIC SERVICES - POPULOUS SOUTH HAMPSHIRE NOW BEARING SOME OF THE HEAVIEST CUTS, WITH LACK OF CONSISTENCY BETWEEN OPERATORS**

**OVERVIEW**

Inevitably these are unfamiliar times on the railways, at many levels.

Franchising is being superseded by emergency and post-emergency contracts, with the Williams review seemingly overtaken by events.

People are being urged not to travel to work. Many trains have few passengers and most run more or less on time.

Those who continue to rely on rail travel are deemed capable of crossing footbridges at major stations without announcements urging them to hold handrails.

The media report service cuts of about 10% nationally, but there are big discrepancies between the policies of different operators facing similar issues.

The Office for National Statistics shows Southampton-Portsmouth as the seventh most populous built-up area in the UK. Yet, by way of local illustration, weekly train departures from Southampton Central are cut by 21% overall.

With demand for leisure and weekend travel reportedly holding up better than demand for commuting, it’s unsurprising that operators in Hampshire are running near-normal weekend services (where engineering works allow) and reducing Monday-Friday services.

However, the scale of current services cuts appears not to reflect operators’ dependence on commuters. The weekly position at Southampton Central is:

Companies with higher dependence on commuters:

\* 271 fewer SWR services (24.1% reduction)

\* 5 fewer Southern services (2.2% reduction)

Companies with lower dependence on commuters:

\* 95 fewer Cross Country services (37.7% reduction)

\* 27 fewer GWR services (10% reduction)

Notably, there were 1,469 scheduled weekly departures from Southampton in the summer of 1995 (the last year before franchising started), and there are 1,480 now (against 1,878 planned pre-Covid).

In 1995 direct services ran to a wider range of destinations, including in the West of England, South West Wales, the North and Scotland. And larger local towns such as Totton were much better served.

So we now have more services to fewer destinations, a result of franchise re-shaping and efforts by the former South West Trains to block rival operators. So much for privatisation boosting customer choice through competition.

Perhaps the future network will see a return to fewer but wider-ranging services on a permanent basis. Passengers have always preferred direct trains, and operator resistance to holding connections as the network filled up won’t have changed minds.

Cross Country has noted that more diesel trains are becoming spare, and is mulling over possibilities such as extending the Nottingham-Cardiff service to Carmarthen. One report suggests they might even be interested in routes not serving Birmingham New Street station, which would be a radical change.

Time to look at demand for direct services from Southampton, for example to the West of England, Swansea, Liverpool, Kent (by diversion of Southern’s Victoria services via Redhill and Tonbridge) or Paddington via Reading (serving a station with interchange for Heathrow Airport)?

**CURRENT TIMETABLE**

**An illustrative summary and outline of current changes are below. The outline is not intended to be comprehensive. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but please always check operator or National Rail websites before travel. Temporary changes for engineering work continue, sometimes affecting early and late services during the working week as well as at weekends.**

SUMMARIES OF WEEKLY TRAIN DEPARTURES FROM SOUTHAMPTON CENTRAL, BY FINAL DESTINATION, AS PLANNED AND AS ACTUALLY OPERATING FROM SEPTEMBER 2020

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CROSS COUNTRY**  **Birmingham**  **Bournemouth**  **Edinburgh**  **Manchester**  **Newcastle**  **York**  **TOTAL**  **GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY**  **Brighton**  **Bristol**  **Bristol Parkway**  **Cardiff**  **Great Malvern**  **Portsmouth & Southsea**  **Portsmouth Harbour**  **Westbury**  **TOTAL**  **SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY**  **Basingstoke**  **Bournemouth**  **Branksome**  **Brockenhurst**  **Eastleigh**  **Fratton**  **London Waterloo**  **Poole**  **Portsmouth & Southsea**  **Portsmouth Harbour**  **Romsey**  **Salisbury**  **Weymouth**  **Winchester**  **TOTAL**  **SOUTHERN**  **Barnham**  **Brighton**  **Gatwick Airport**  **Littlehampton**  **London Bridge**  **London Victoria**  **TOTAL** | **PLAN**  **7**  **107**  **5**  **101**  **31**  **1**  **252**  **10**  **9**  **5**  **101**  **18**  **5**  **114**  **7**  **269**  **1**  **21**  **5**  **10**  **11**  **354**  **140**  **97**  **28**  **124**  **122**  **207**  **5**  **1125**    **5**  **111**  **6**  **15**  **5**  **90**  **232** | **ACTUAL**  **7**  **72**  **71**  **6**  **1**  **157**  **1**  **9**  **101**  **13**  **116**  **2**  **242**  **1**  **106**  **1**  **65**  **227**  **34**  **47**  **124**  **122**  **122**  **5**  **854**  **111**  **6**  **20**  **90**  **227** |

**CROSS COUNTRY**

Monday-Friday services between Southampton Central and York, Newcastle and Edinburgh, and some services between Bournemouth and Manchester via Southampton, do not run south of Reading. Services to Manchester Piccadilly leave Southampton at 05.15, 07.15, 08.12, 10.17, 12.17, 14.15, 16.17, 17.17 and 19.17, with a final service as far as Birmingham New Street at 20.17. Trains to Bournemouth leave Southampton Central at 08.49, 09.45, 11.45, 13.44, 15.44, 17.44, 18.45, 20.45 and 22.45. No Cross Country trains serve Brockenhurst. Only the 08.12 Southampton Central-Manchester serves Winchester. Last southbound train is the 19.27 from Manchester (21.04 from Birmingham New Street); this train omits the Southampton Airport Parkway stop as well as Winchester. Trains may have more carriages than previously. Reservations are strongly recommended but cannot be made as far ahead as usual.

Weekend service pattern generally normal, apart from engineering work changes.

**[From the December timetable change**, Cross Country’s current thinking involves no further changes to Wessex services, except restoration of Winchester stops. However, the company is de-centralising from Birmingham and considering the future scope of its operations. Continuation of Southampton-Newcastle services (rather than their diversion from the East Coast Main Line to Hull as previously mooted) is favoured. With the Open Access Euston-Blackpool service bid now abandoned, the possibility of using the spare electric trains on Cross Country services between Birmingham and Manchester is under consideration, and could presumably have implications for existing services between Bournemouth and Manchester.**]**

**GREAT WESTERN**

Minor cuts on Sundays to Fridays, principally involving the awkwardly scheduled Brighton services.

On Mondays to Fridays, the sole Great Malvern-Brighton service (14.34 from Southampton Central) is cut, along with the subsequent 17.02 Brighton-Bristol Parkway (18.43 from Southampton Central) and 21.21 Bristol Parkway-Portsmouth & Southsea (23.33 from Southampton Central). Also cut are the 12.27 Southampton Central-Great Malvern and 21.22 Southampton-Westbury, and their inward services from Westbury and Gloucester respectively. The morning services from Southampton Central and Brighton to Great Malvern continue.

No Sunday services run to or from Brighton. Most Cardiff-Portsmouth trains start their journeys about 10 minutes later and are accelerated. The 10.15/12.13/16.36 Cardiff-Brighton become the 10.24/12.24/16.36 Cardiff-Portsmouth Harbour. The 16.13 to Portsmouth Harbour becomes the 16.21. The 08.19 Romsey-Brighton and 1740 Cardiff-Portsmouth Harbour are withdrawn. The 11.10 Brighton-Cardiff becomes the 12.08 Portsmouth Harbour-Cardiff. The 15.47/17.46 Brighton-Bristol become the 16.36/18.42 Portsmouth Harbour-Bristol.

These changes mean that fast Sunday services to Portsmouth Harbour leave Southampton Central at 11.04 and hourly to 23.08 plus 19.28. Return services leave Portsmouth Harbour for Southampton Central at 09.08, 11.08 and hourly to 20.08, plus 16.36, 18.42 and 22.05. Times of the hourly services may vary by a few minutes during the day.

Weekend engineering work changes may apply.

**[From the December timetable change**, information on National Rail’s Journey Planner implies that GWR aspires to restore the full service.**]**

**SOUTH WESTERN**

Monday-Friday services remain heavily cut. The Waterloo-Weymouth service is reduced to hourly, and the Waterloo-Poole service non-existent.

Hourly semi-fast Waterloo-Weymouth trains are now the backbone of the South Western main line timetable. These generally stop at Clapham Junction, Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Southampton Airport Parkway, Southampton Central, Brockenhurst, New Milton, Christchurch, and then all stations to Weymouth. Departures from Waterloo are at 05.30 (also calls at Eastleigh, Totton, Sway and Hinton Admiral), 06.30 (same stops as the 05.30 plus Ashurst and Beaulieu Road), 08.00 and hourly to 20.00. The 17.00 and 18.00 do not call at Clapham Junction. The 20.00 calls at Totton and Ashurst. Departure times from Southampton Central to Weymouth are at 07.04, 07.59, 09.24 and hourly to 18.24, 19.21, 20.24, and 21.24.

In the opposite direction trains leave Weymouth at 06.00, 07.10, 08.03, 09.05, 10.03 and hourly to 20.03, with the same stopping pattern. The 06.03 and 20.03 also call at Hinton Admiral, Sway, Ashurst and Totton, and the 20.03 also at Eastleigh and Shawford. These trains provide an exactly hourly service from Southampton Central to Waterloo from 08.00 to 22.00. Most of them stand for 14 minutes at Bournemouth!

A few services operate between Waterloo and Bournemouth at the following times: 07.35 (calling at Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Eastleigh, Southampton Airport Parkway, Southampton Central (09.00), Totton, Brockenhurst and then all stations). 09.35 (calling at Woking, Winchester, Southampton Airport Parkway, Southampton Central (10.51) and Brockenhurst), 17.35 (calling at Winchester, Southampton Airport Parkway, Southampton Central (18.51) and Brockenhurst), 18.35 (calling at Basingstoke, Winchester, Southampton Airport Parkway, Southampton Central (10.51) and Brockenhurst), 21.00 (calling at Clapham Junction, Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Eastleigh, Southampton Airport Parkway, Southampton Central (22.27), Totton, Ashurst, Brockenhurst and then all stations), and 22.05 (calling at the same stops, except Woking, as the 21.00, and departing from Southampton Central at 23.30), 22.35 (calling at Woking, Basingstoke, Winchester, Southampton Airport Parkway, Southampton Central (23.53) and Brockenhurst).

Waterloo trains start from Bournemouth at the following times. 05.24 (calling at Brockenhurst, Southampton Central (05.55), Southampton Airport Parkway, Eastleigh, Winchester, Basingstoke, Woking, Clapham Junction and Waterloo), 05.56 (calling at Brockenhurst, Totton, Southampton Central (06.30), Southampton Airport Parkway, Winchester, Basingstoke, Woking and Waterloo), 06.04 (calling at all stations to Totton except Beaulieu Road, Southampton Central (06.59), Southampton Airport Parkway, Eastleigh, Winchester, Basingstoke, Woking and Waterloo), 06.34 (calling at same stations as the 06.04 except Eastleigh and Woking, and leaving Southampton Central at 07.28). 11.53 (calling at New Milton, Brockenhurst, Southampton Central (12.30), Southampton Airport Parkway, Winchester, Basingstoke, Woking and Waterloo), 14.53 (calling at the same stations as the 11.53 and departing from Southampton Central at 15.30).

Waterloo-Southampton Central trains, calling at Woking, Winchester and Southampton Airport Parkway, depart at 08.35 (also calls at Clapham Junction, Farnborough, Fleet, Basingstoke and Eastleigh), 12.35 (also calls at Basingstoke), 14.35, 15.35 (also calls at Basingstoke), 16.35, 19.35, and 20.35 (also calls at Clapham Junction, Farnborough, Fleet, Basingstoke Micheldever and Eastleigh).

Southampton Central-Waterloo trains, calling at Southampton Airport Parkway, Winchester, Basingstoke and Woking, depart at 04.52 (also calls at Eastleigh, Micheldever, Fleet, Farnborough and Clapham Junction), 10.31, 13.31, 14.30, 16.30, 17.31, 18.30 and 22.30 (also calls at Eastleigh and Clapham Junction).

Local trains between Southampton Central and Bournemouth run as follows, generally calling at all stations except Millbrook and Redbridge. From Southampton Central at 06.21 (not calling at Beaulieu Road), 09.55, 10.59, 12.00, 12.54, 13.55, 14.55, 15.55, 16.55, 17.55 (last train to call at Beaulieu Road), 18.54 (not calling at Pokesdown), 19.55, 20.55, 21.55. Good news is that these trains do not have the 25-minute Brockenhurst stops of the suspended Waterloo-Poole services inherited from South West Trains.

Return services leave Bournemouth at 07.00 (calling at Christchurch, New Milton, Brockenhurst, Southampton Central (07.38), Southampton Airport Parkway, Eastleigh, Shawford and Winchester), 07.45 (terminates at Brockenhurst), 09.00, 09.58, 11.02, 11.58, 12.58, 13.58, 14.58, 15.58, 16.56, 17.58, 18.58 (last train to stop at Beaulieu Road), 19.58, and 22.12 (starts from Weymouth at 21.10 and calls at all stations before Bournemouth). Note that, extraordinarily, there are no eastbound departures from Ashurst/Totton between 07.48/07.53 and 09.36/09.41.

Stopping trains leave Southampton Central at 07.18 and 07.52 to Portsmouth & Southsea, then at 08.44 and hourly to 20.44 to Fratton, with a final train to Portsmouth & Southsea at 22.44 (note the two-hour gap). Return trains leave Portsmouth & Southsea at 06.38, 07.38 and 08.38, with hourly services starting from Fratton from 09.42 to the last service at 21.42.

The pattern of the Salisbury-Southampton-Romsey trains is generally unchanged. Note that, with a few exceptions as above, they provide the only service between Southampton Central and Eastleigh. A rare piece of good news is that the 06.14 Totton-Romsey is now diverted to start from Salisbury. Totton therefore gets a fast service to Waterloo at 06.23, restoring a much-missed corresponding departure which was axed by South West Trains well over ten years ago.

Weekend services are almost normal. However, the two Sunday evening Poole-Bournemouth-Southampton Central-Clapham Junction-Waterloo fast services do not operate. Nor does the linked semi-fast service from Waterloo to Poole at 22.35.

**Portsmouth – Waterloo routes**

Monday-Friday Portsmouth Harbour services via Hedge End. The basic hourly service operates almost normally, with the additional peak services omitted. Note that these trains provide most of Eastleigh’s London services, as only a few main line services call there.

Services to Portsmouth Harbour at 07.02 from Eastleigh, 06.19 from Woking, 06.42, 08.09 and hourly to 22.09 from Waterloo. These trains all serve Shawford (except the 08.09 from Waterloo) in lieu of the Waterloo-Poole services. No southbound departure from Shawford between 08.24 and 10.23.

Return services to Waterloo from Portsmouth Harbour at 05.00 and 05.41, 06.55 (starts from Portsmouth & Southsea, not serving the Harbour), 07.41, 08.59 and hourly to 14.59, 15.58, 16.59 and hourly to 18.59, 19.59 (terminates at Woking), 20.59, 21.54 (terminates at Eastleigh with connection into the 22.30 Southampton Central-Waterloo). Trains stop at Shawford, except the 11.59 from Portsmouth Harbour (so 2-hour gap), up to the 19.59 to Woking. Shawford is also served by the 20.03 Weymouth-Waterloo which calls there at 22.18.

Monday-Friday Portsmouth Harbour services via Guildford. Half hourly semi-fast services reduced to hourly, but stopping services accelerated by removal of overtaking at Haslemere.

Semi-fast services (calling at Woking, Guildford, Godalming, Haslemere, Petersfield, Havant, Fratton, and Portsmouth & Southsea) depart from Waterloo at 08.05 (not serving Godalming or Portsmouth Harbour), 08.30, 09.05 (not serving Godalming or Portsmouth Harbour), 09.30 and hourly to 16.30, 17.15 (calls Guildford, Haslemere, and all stations to Portsmouth & Southsea where it terminates), 17.30 (also calls at Worplesdon), 18.05 (not calling at Woking or Godalming), 18.15 (calls Guildford, Godalming, Haslemere, and all stations to Portsmouth & Southsea where it terminates), 18.30, 19.30, and 22.30 (also calls at Farncombe).

Stopping services (calling at Clapham Junction, Woking, and then all stations) depart from Waterloo at 05.20, 06.45 and hourly to 18.45, 19.15 (after Bedhampton calls at Cosham, Portchester, Fareham, Swanwick, Netley, Woolston and Southampton Central), 19.45 (terminating at Portsmouth & Southsea) 20.45 and hourly to 22.45. Additional services from Guildford at 05.16 and 05.41 (both fast to Haslemere), and 07.15 (fast from Havant to Portsmouth & Southsea).

Semi-fast services depart from Portsmouth Harbour for Waterloo at 06.15 (not calling at Godalming), 06.40 (calling additionally at Liss and Liphook but not Woking) and 07.14; then 07.45, hourly to 18.45, and 20.45 (all stopping additionally at Clapham Junction). Additional services at 15.20 and 16.20 from Portsmouth & Southsea (not calling at Woking or Clapham Junction).

Stopping services depart from Portsmouth Harbour for Waterloo at 04.40 (not calling at Witley, Milford or Worplesdon), 05.49 (not calling at Witley, Milford, Worplesdon or Clapham Junction), 06.19 (not stopping at Clapham Junction), 07.18, 08.15 and hourly to 14.15, 15.19 and 16.19 (neither calling at Witley or Milford), 17.15, 18.15, 19.15, 20.19, 21.19, and 22.19 (terminates at Guildford). Additional service at 05.23 from Portsmouth & Southsea (calls at all stations to Haslemere, then Godalming, Guildford, Woking, Clapham Junction and Waterloo).

**West of England line**

Reduced services on Mondays to Fridays. Trains leave Salisbury for Exeter at 06.07, 07.38 (first service with connection from Portsmouth and Southampton), 08.47 and hourly to 16.47, 17.54 and hourly until 20.54, and 21.53. Return services from Exeter St David’s at 05.10, 06.41, 07.25, 08.23, 09.25 and hourly to 22.25 (20.25 is the last service with a connection to Southampton and Portsmouth).

**[From the December timetable change**, SWR’s aspiration is to return services to pre-Covid levels, ‘with some services removed’. National Rail’s Journey Planner suggests that reductions in South Hampshire will principally involve the Waterloo-Poole trains being restored only between Winchester and Poole, superseding the current Southampton-Bournemouth local trains, and with off-peak journey times between Totton and New Milton/Christchurch again doubled by 25-minute stops at Brockenhurst.**]**

**SOUTHERN**

Monday-Friday service pattern from Southampton Central aligned with Saturday services, though timings may vary by a few minutes. The 05.46 to Brighton, 06.07 to London Bridge and 06.36 to London Victoria are replaced by the 06.13 to London Victoria and 06.25 to Brighton. The 06.13 calls at Gatwick Airport, unlike the former London Bridge train. The 09.28 and 11.28 to Brighton serve Swanwick and Fareham instead of Southampton Airport Parkway and Eastleigh. The 14.24 to Brighton serves Southampton Airport Parkway and Eastleigh instead of Swanwick. The 23.16 to Barnham continues to Littlehampton.

Weekend service pattern normal, apart from engineering work changes.

On Sundays The 15.30 and 17.30 Southern services from Brighton continue their long station stops at Barnham for now non-existent GWR trains to overtake, so still turn around at Fratton.

**Early Monday-Friday services from Portsmouth area**

Normal services replaced by 04.52 Portsmouth Harbour-Victoria via Hove (giving a fast Harbour-to-Hove time of 58 minutes), 05.50 Havant-Victoria, 05.57 Portsmouth & Southsea-Littlehampton, 06.11 Portsmouth Harbour-Victoria, 06.29 Portsmouth Harbour-Brighton, 06.57 Portsmouth & Southsea-Littlehampton, 07.06 Portsmouth Harbour-Victoria, 07.30 Portsmouth Harbour-Brighton, 07.57 Portsmouth & Southsea-Littlehampton, 08.15 Portsmouth & Southsea-Victoria, 08.29 Portsmouth Harbour-Brighton, 08.57 Portsmouth & Southsea-Littlehampton. Services then normally leave from Portsmouth Harbour at 11-past to Victoria and 29-past to Brighton, and from Portsmouth & Southsea at 57-past to Littlehampton. Timings may vary slightly.

**[From the December timetable change**, early Southern trains from Portsmouth and Southampton are expected to revert to their normal service patterns. However, Portsmouth-Victoria services will usually run only to and from Portsmouth & Southsea, to improve punctuality.**]**

**TRAINS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

SWR’s 18 refurbished Wessex Electric trains for Waterloo-Guildford-Portsmouth, and token Waterloo-Poole, services are not needed for the current timetable and have been withdrawn for traction equipment changes. The remaining six units (which would have been used on the Open Access bid for a two-hourly Southampton-Waterloo service with different stopping patterns) were being broken up in the spring.

GWR is transferring more Thames Turbo units to the Bristol area. The whole fleet is to receive a facelift, and looks likely to be used on all GWR services through South Hampshire until such time as bi-mode or non-diesel trains are available.

Southern is to undertake work on the electrostar trains used on Hampshire services.

Much publicity was given to a VIP train from Southampton Central to Fawley at the end of July. This has raised hopes of regular services running over the line. However, in these highly politicised times, there are suspicions that its main purpose may have been to side-line the local MP, who had recently had the Conservative whip withdrawn and was noticeably absent. The principal intermediate stop on the service would be Totton, so a solid case for the reopening needs to be supported by a much more attractive mainline service to increase custom there.

The concrete footbridge at Millbrook station is to be replaced. The new bridge will not be accessible from the footpath on the south side of the station. While the footpath is lightly used, there is inevitably a risk of someone finding the link gone and taking a short cut across the electrified track.

A new station is under construction at Green Park, between Reading West and Mortimer, and will be served by Reading-Basingstoke local services.

No Christmas or Boxing Day services in South Hampshire. From 27 December to 3 January, there will be reduced services at Waterloo, for renewal of switches and crossings. Windsor line trains will run only to and from Clapham Junction.

Infrastructure work in connection with running longer freight trains to and from the Southampton container terminals will involve major line closures during the winter.:

\* Saturday 30 January: lines closed from Southampton Airport Parkway to Brockenhurst, and Redbridge to Romsey.

\* Sunday 31 January: lines closed from Eastleigh to Brockenhurst, Redbridge to Romsey, and St Denys to Fareham.

\* Saturday/Sunday 13/14 February: lines closed from Eastleigh to Brockenhurst, Redbridge to Romsey, and St Denys to Woolston.

\* Monday-Friday 15-19 February: lines closed from Southampton Central to Redbridge.

Further disruption will be caused by a maintenance project at the western end of Southampton tunnel on Saturday/Sunday 3/4 April.

**CONSULTATION ON DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR PORTSMOUTH**

We have been invited to respond to this 12-week consultation. First impression is that rail issues are given very limited consideration. Closing date for comments is Monday 21 December. Please send any contributions for a reply from our Group. Our contact details are below. If you would prefer to reply direct, the address is:

<https://travel.portsmouth.gov.uk/schemes/transport-strategy-2020/>

**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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