

ESSEX BUS NEWS

December 1998

The monthly magazine of the ESSEX BUS ENTHUSIASTS GROUP

(Formerly the Eastern National Enthusiasts Group)

416

A Very Merry Christmas to all our readers !



HARRISBUS OF WEST THURROCK. DAF IKARUS J51GCM IN AN ALL OVER LIVERY
FOR MOBILE PHONE CENTRE OF GRAYS. DAVE ARNOLD.

MANAGING EDITOR:

Peter Snell

Please send your news reports to:

SUB EDITORS:

Southend Transport:

Steve Thompson, 49 Meadow View Walk, Canvey Island, SS8 9SA

Thamesway:

John Weeks, 34 Elliot Close, South Woodham Ferrers, CM3 5YN

Essex Buses & S Essex small ops:

Ian Ransom, 34 Donald Way, Chelmsford, CM2 9JE

County Bus:

Ian Burton, 46 Stoneleigh Drive, Hoddesdon, EN11 9LN

North Essex major ops:

Paul Sparks, 87 Thorpe Road, Great Clacton, CO15 4NT

North Essex small ops:

Dave Arnold, 21 Cedar Chase, Heybridge, Maldon, CM9 4NR

TOURS ORGANISER:

Dave Arnold, 21 Cedar Chase, Heybridge, Maldon, CM9 4NR

PHOTO ORDERS:

Peter Snell, 6 Mandeville Way, Benfleet, SS7 4LH

MEMBERSHIP:

Derek Stebbing, 18 Lynmouth Avenue, Chelmsford, CM2 0TP

ESSEX BUS NEWS

416

EDITORIAL

The Committee wishes all members a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year

416 FOCUS OF THE MONTH

DPU416 an AEC Regent with Strachen H48R bodywork operated by Colchester Borough Transport No27, one of three 27-29 delivered in 1936. 27 and 28 were loaned to London Transport from October 1940 to July 1941 and was operated at Seven Kings and Barking garages. 27 was withdrawn in 1949 and later entered service with F.J. Honeywood of Stanstead Suffolk until October 1951, it was finally scrapped by W North at Leeds in 1955.

Arriva Colchester fleet renumbered into Arriva The Shires sequence, details to be published as soon as possible.

EARLY TO BED.

On Friday 4th December around 7-45 am Thamesway Mercedes 322 329LJN was involved in an accident in Daws Heath Road Hadleigh after colliding with a car, it landed up partially inside a bedroom, fortunately the occupant had already left.

Thamesway's Canvey Clipper lacks passengers due to traffic congestion.

Transport chiefs at Essex County Council have given the go ahead to a new Bus Telematics project to be tested on the Canvey Clipper on Canvey Island.

ROCHFORD MEETINGS FREIGHT HOUSE 8pm

1999

January	No Meeting
February 9th	Programme to be announced <i>David Kershaw</i>
March 9th	EBEG AGM followed by slide show by Alan Osborne
April 13th	Programme to be announced.

Please note the February and March meetings will in the Pullman Suite, same door but on ground floor.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 1999.

All members, whose subscriptions are due for renewal at the end of the year, could you please send your suscriptions to Derek Stebbings by 3rd January.

Contributions received with thanks from Essex Buses. Arriva Southend. Essex C.C. Colin Sigston. Ian Taylor Roger Tuke. Alan Colebourne. First Bus Enthusiasts Group. and finally Frank Cunningham, Durban South Africa.

Contributions for January EBN should be with Sub Editors by January 4th and to the Man. Editor by January 8th..



FIRST GROUP NEWS

The bus operations of Timeline, Leigh (Manchester), have been acquired. This adds about 50 vehicles, which have been allocated to various First Manchester depots. Timeline, was one of the few major independents, remaining in that City.

The first low floor articulated vehicle has been delivered. With a capacity of 140 (55+85), they are due to enter service in Manchester, Glasgow and Leeds, during 1999. Based on Volvo/B10LA, with Wrights bodywork, they are in pastel livery. An article, with pictures appeared in Buses (December) and very smart they look too.

First Eastern National

PUBLICITY

Recent timetable leaflets, are for services:-

21 dated 9.11.98; 34/A dated 14.11.98; 59 dated 9.11.98; 71/A/B/C dated 16.11.98; 132/3 dated 9.11.98.

UNUSUAL WORKINGS

On 2.12.98. CF 712, appeared on service 36. As this batch, is normally restricted to Diamond service, a paper route number was stuck in the windscreen, as number blinds, are not fitted. This is the first recorded appearance, of one of these vehicles, on any route, other than Diamond.



HARRIS bus

VEHICLES

Dennis Dart/Plaxton Super Pointer demonstrator R739 TMO, was on loan for a week in late September.

The usual influx of buses, for the Lakeside Coach park shuttle, has seen DAF/Ikarus M763 RCP and M848 RCP arrive on loan from Arriva, Cleckheaton.

Dennis dart SLF/Plaxton R438 FTU and R659 GCA are on loan from Dawson Rentals.

News of home based vehicles, is that DAF/Ikarus J51 GCX is an overall advert for Mobile Phone Centre, Grays.

HARRIS COACHES

VEHICLES

DAF/Van Hool M502 XWC, has been repainted in the new coach livery.

ALLOCATION CHANGES

November 1998

342, 343, 1803, 1886 POOL – RESERVE, 1830 RESERVE – DISPOSAL, 3069 RESERVE – BN, 732 – 738 on loan to First Eastern Counties. These vehicles were reported last month as new to the Eastern National fleet, but they appear on the current Thamesway allocation list.

NEWS

Darts 904 – 906 have been on loan to First London Buslines. They were used mostly on route 285 Heathrow Airport to Kingston.

LTB route 193 was finally transferred from Ponders End to Romford on October 17th. Mercedes 401 – 410 were transferred with the route. Romford depot allocation is currently: MB709Ds 349, 350, 397, 398, 2657/8/9 for Brentwood locals, MB709s 401 – 410 for LTB 193, MB811Ds 805 – 811 and Dart 913 for routes 251/551

Thamesway vehicles renumbered into Capital sequences:

231, 234, 235 (D231/4/5 PPU) to 931, 934, 935; 2252 (C230 HCV) to 932
251, 253, 255 (F251 NJN, F253/255 RHK) to 561, 563, 562; 261 (D764 KWT) to 564
(Note that 245/6, 254/6/7/8 are already with Capital as 565/9, 570, 566/7/8).
310 – 306 (H301 – 306LPU) to 581 – 586; 336, 337 (H345/6 LJN) to 936, 937,
388 – 393/5 (H388 – 393/5 MAR), 396 (K396 GHJ) to 588 – 593/5/6 (394 now 594 already in stock).
411 – 419 (R411 – 419 VPU) to 571 – 579,
800 – 804 (F800 – 804 RHK) to 600, 606, 607, 603, 604,
973 – 986 (N973 – 986 EHJ) to 773 – 786.
388 – 393, 395, 396, 411 – 416, 973 – 986 and 2252 are currently shown in the official allocation list as on loan

Additional transfers from Thamesway to Capital are 253 and 255 (F253/5 RHK). These were part of Thamesways withdrawn stock and are not in service, being parked at Brimsdown outstation.

Following a recent visit to Norfolk, Dave Arnold has provided some information on ex-Thamesway vehicles currently with Eastern Counties.

K902, 903, and 905 CVW are on loan to First Blue Bus but are still in Thamesway livery. They have been allocated fleet numbers 2000, 2001 and 2009 respectively, but K903 CVW has been seen carrying fleet number 2009 and K905 CVW has fleet number 2001.
H307 LJN fleet number 1307 has been transferred from Eastern Counties at Bury St. Edmunds to Flying Banana.
H347 LJN and H349 LJN are in Flying Banana livery.
H348 LJN is in Eastern Counties livery fleet number 800.
N616 – 618 APU are now Eastern Counties 43 – 45. They are at Ipswich for service X99 to Lowestoft.



NORTH ESSEX BUS SCENE

Heddingham Omnibuses

Due to join this fleet soon is Volvo Olympian Double Decker with Alexander RL 86 seater body Registration No. S300 XHK, Fleet No. L300. It is expected for completion at the body builder by mid-December.

Bristol VR, Registration No. DCH 529X, Fleet No. L289 has lost its "Kill Your Speed" livery and is now specially painted for Clacton Common Service No. 130.

Now sold to Partridge Coaches is Leyland Tiger Registration No. F146 SPV, Fleet No. L231.

Currently receiving a heavy overhaul is Bristol VR, Registration No. RUA 461W, Fleet No. L288.

Due in January are two more second hand Volvo B6's.

First Eastern National

The new owner of Leyland National Registration No. VAR899S, ex Fleet No.1833 says it will remain in dark green and yellow. It will also stay with a small but noticable dent near the right headlight as this has dented the framework as well as the panel and would involve dismantling the whole front of the bus to correct. This, though, should become less noticable when the vehicle receives a "new" headlight surround.

Taken from the yard in Clacton late September/early October was Bristol KSW open-topper Registration No.WNO 480, Fleet No.2384. It has passed to a certain Mr. Larkin in Rochford. I understand that part of the agreement allowing the transfer of this vehicle is that it will be restored to a road-worthy condition and that we may be able to look forward to seeing on the road again by June 1999!

Flagfinders of Braintree now have in their fleet a Paramount registration No. D21 CPF which is in cream and has "Flagfinders" on it in lime green green lettering

Brandons still have left, doing school work, DMS's Registration No.'s GHV 3N & GHV 97N.

Miscellaneous Seen by Group member Graham Belfall in Colchester on 6th November 1998 was Mercedes 608D, Registration No.B42 AAF, Fleet No. 9305. The vehicle had an orange light on the roof and was wearing First Thamesway fleetnames. The bottom of the vehicle was painted black. Graham came to the conclusion that this vehicle was on engineering duties.

Thamesway National Registration No. YEV 328S is understood to have broken down whilst returning from the Canvey Bus Rally in October and this led a lot of people to fear it may have been withdrawn, but it was seen running in Southend on 10th November 1998.

I would like to extend my thanks to Mr. D.R. MacGregor MBE B.Sc.(Econ.) MCTT of Heddingham Omnibuses Limited and Group member Sue Burdon for supplying information and thus facilitating its publication in this edition of Essex Bus News.

***Paul Sparks,
December 1998***

ARRIVA SOUTHEND

FLEET

Dennis Dart DSL65 received attention at Arriva Enfield Repair Centre in November for accident repairs.

Fleetline 250 Q475MEV had front dome repairs at London Rd in November.

Repaints

Dennis Lance LSL002 M762JPA to Arriva livery and renumbered 002.

SERVICES

Timetables were revised on all services, week commencing 22/11/98.

New timetable leaflets are available and a summary booklet.

Details of Xmas services are not yet available.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW No2

COLCHESTER B, T		61-66	NNO 61P-66P
LEYLAND AN68A/1R		Eastern Coach Works H74F	1978
61	NNO61P	CARTERS COLCHESTER 61	
62	NNO62P	EASTBOURNE 29 RENUMBERED 62	WITHDRAWN.
63	NNO63P	BOONS BOREHAM	
64	NNO64P	EASTBOURNE 30 RENUMBERED 64	WITHDRAWN.
65	NNO65P	C LINE. NORTH WESTERN 536	MARTINS DEALERS
66	NNO66P	BOONS BOREHAM.	

OTHER OPERATORS - REST OF ESSEX

A&D BENFLEET Bedford YMP/Plaxton B630 WNG, has been acquired from Need-A-Bus, Bowers Gifford.

ADTAX SAFFRON WALDEN LDV minibuses into this fleet are, R901 SBV and R549 PER.

AIRPORT COACHES STANSTED Leyland National XEH 254M, is still owned.

APT RAYLEIGH Vehicles sold recently are, RBD 215 a DAF/Jonckhree, B592 XWW a Tiger/Plaxton. N5 APT was re-registered N812 HTW, before it's sale to Sanders, Holt.

BILLERICAY CARRIAGES Ford Transit R356 YPU, is with this new operator.

BISS STANSTED S935 RBE a Mercedes/Autobus is a recent addition.

BOONS BOREHAM Further to Buses magazine (October), Atlanteans, VPA 149S, XPG 182/4T have NOT been acquired.

BRADWELL TRAVEL BRAINTREE Ford Transit/Chassis Developments B405 VWY has been acquired.

BRANDONS BLACKMORE END Bristol VR/Alexander OSR 194R, has been acquired from Jacksons, Bicknacre. Dennis Dominator/Alexander FGE 441X has also been acquired.

CEDRIC WIVENHOE Bristol VR FKM 881V has been acquired.

CLINTONA BRENTWOOD R603/4 HKN both Iveco/Marshall, have been acquired from Eastonways, Ramsgate.

CROWN BENFLEET Volvo/Ikarus E964 EHK has gone to Stephenson, Rochford, in a dealer capacity.

DCH COLCHESTER Leyland Leopard/Duple MIB 513 (NNH 186Y) has been sold to Able Travel, Felixstowe.

DRAWDIVE WICKFORD Ford Transit/Dormobile F45 GNS, has been acquired from Bobs, Wickford.

GODWARD RAMSDEN HEATH Bedford YMT/Plaxton ARW 62S, has been acquired from Travelux, Stanford-le-Hope.

GOLDEN BOY ROYDON Leyland Leopard/Plaxton YOI 5475 (WJM 812T) has been sold to Avro, Corringham..

GOLF EXECUTIVE BOREHAM Freight Rover/Dormobile D44 TKA has been acquired.

GRAHAMS KELVEDON Mercedes/Plaxton Beaver K4 FET has been acquired. A new addition is LDV Convoy S442 RBC.

HALSTEAD TRAVEL A second operating centre, at Coggeshall Road, Earls Colne has been opened.

JACKSON BICKNACRE DAF/Van Hool J811 KHD, has been acquired from Galloway, Mendlesham.

KIRBY RAYLEIGH Setra K19 BYS is a new (or acquired and reregistered) addition.

LODGE HIGH EASTER ORJ 44W a MCW Metrobus has been acquired, it carries an overall advert for the Ford Ka, and is driven around London empty!! Scania/Van Hool K3 ACE has been acquired, as has E971 VUD an Iveco/Robin Hood.

NEED-A-BUS BOWERS GIFFORD Ford Transit S933 SOO is a new addition.

NELSON WICKFORD Leyland national 2 BIL 6538 (ARN 891Y) has suffered serious accident damage. Three Bristol VRs have been acquired from United Counties, they are FDV 835V, LBD 921V and LFJ 855W. There are now only three Fleetlines left, TGX 892M, THM 705M and GHM 797N. The others SMU 721N, GHM 803N, plus Leyland National GUG 132N, have been withdrawn and sold.

RAYLEIGH ROADWAYS SHOTGATE Bristol VR, OPL 215R is being used for spares.

RAYNHAM NEWPORT The operating centre, is now at Uttlesford DC, Water Lane, Newport. An acquisition is J338 VSC, an Iveco van conversion.

RELIANCE BENFLEET Olympian/ECW coach HSB 312Y (new as YPJ 503Y) has been acquired.

RUFFLE CASTLE HEDINGHAM Volvo/Jonckhree G167 RBD has been acquired. The first double decker for this fleet, is former Windmill, MCW Metrobus A143 AMO. A second unidentified double-decker, is also present.

S&M BOWERS GIFFORD Bristol VR PJO 447P has been acquired. Fleetlines KUC 969P and OUC 38R, plus reliance MRR 808K are all delicensed.

SOUTHEND RADIO CARS Bedford CF/Dormobile C733 HKK and Freight Rover Sherpa/? E615 HLU are in use here.

STORT VALLEY STANSTED A further vehicle from Travellers, Hounslow is P666 TCC a Dennis Javelin/Plaxton.

SUPREME SOUTHEND A further Metrobus, MRJ 37W has been acquired. Also here is Leyland national 2 EON 825V. RBU 183R a Leyland National that was acquired for spares has now gone. P175 ANR a ?/Caetano was in the yard in October, and is assumed to have been acquired.

THORNS OF RAYLEIGH (DARREN THORN) Not to be confused with APT, which is run by the father of Darren. Operation is from Castle Point Council, Kiln Road. A second vehicle is YFC 736 (KGS 924W) a Bedford/Duple.

WATSON WEST THURROCK FIL 5136 (GVL 929Y) a Neoplan N116, has been acquired. Also here is Mercedes 608, C405 VVN.

WHEELS TAXIS CANVEY ISLAND A recent addition here is LDV Convoy P282 HFY.

Hedingham Omnibuses depot codes.

Since expanding beyond it's original base Hedingham Omnibuses has used depot allocation codes. In their application to vehicles the codes are reinforced by the use of coloured rectangular background patches and they are usually displayed beneath the windscreen on the offside. Sometimes letters are directly applied to the body, particularly in the case of HD when applied to the red livery colour, but this is exceptional. Because they are applied directly to the bodywork vehicles tend to display codes long after they have been transferred elsewhere. Some examples are noted below. The letters are generally black or white, as most appropriate to the base colour, with the exception of Nayland where red was used. It is also notable that black is used for Tollesbury, where the base colour is maroon, and white may have been better. A list of the depots and codes is given below. The colours listed are from personal observation and there may be omissions. They are displayed on some, but by no means all vehicles. The operating bases in alphabetical order are;

Burnham, Springfield Industrial Estate, Burnham on Crouch. Vehicles allocated not thought to have carried a code. Closed and vehicles kept at or near drivers homes as required by January 1998.

Clacton (CN), Telford Road Industrial Estate, Clacton on Sea. First opened in 1992 to replace Tendring, there have been three separate sites, one no longer used. I have only seen the code used on L158, seen 03/03/94. It was displayed black on green in a non-standard size. Current.

Harwich. Parking area only, no code applied to vehicles. Closed.

Hedingham (HD, white on red), Wethersfield Road, Sible Hedingham. Current.

Kelvedon (KN, white on green), High Street, Kelvedon. Current.

Little Tey (CR, white on blue), Church Lane, Little Tey. Aquired with C&R Coaches in January 1982. Current.

Nayland (ND, red on green), Perry Farm, Nayland. Lease aquired along with the Norfolks vehicles and operations in April 1991. Closed in August 1993 on expiry of lease and replaced by Sudbury. i.189 noted at Sudbury depot on 20/05/95 had the ND code in green letters applied directly on to it's red front panel.

Sudbury (SY, white on purple) Chilton Industrial Estate, Sudbury. Opened in September 1993. L148 was noted with white on grey SY allocation lettering 03/05/97. Current.

Tendring (TG, black on orange), Tanners Frozen Foods, Tendring. Opened as a base for former Kemps operations. Kemps were taken over in 1991. Closed November 1992, replaced by Clacton. L169 was, however still carrying the TG code (and Kemp Travel name in the upper windscreen) when photographed on 03/03/94.

Tollesbury (TY, black on maroon), New Road, Tollesbury. Acquired with the takeover of G. W. Osborne and Sons Limited, effective from 10th February 1997. Current.

Walton (WN, black on yellow), Railway Station Yard, Walton on the Naze. Closed by 12/96.

The code colours in the case of CR, ND and TY were evidently chosen to reflect the livery of the operator taken over. I suspect that KN is green as a tribute to Moore Brothers and it might just be the case that the black and yellow colours of WN are a reference to the livery of the Enterprise Bus Company of Clacton who seem to have pioneered the route to Walton via Great Holland on which, incidently, Hedingham briefly competed with Eastern National. HD is, naturally, red, but I don't know if there is any significance to the TG and SY colours.

Observations suggest that buses are more likely than coaches to display the depot codes. It is worth recording however that coaches carry bootlid lettering appropriate to their allocation (a least at the time they were signwritten!). 'Hedingham, Essex' was the original wording, followed later by 'Colchester, Essex', then 'Clacton on Sea, Essex' and 'Sudbury, Suffolk'. This lettering is usually displayed in red on the cream livery colour, but there have been occasional blue examples.

Andrew Colebourne, November 1998.



SAMPSON COACHES AND TRAVEL (BY IAN TAYLOR)

Most bus enthusiasts will remember Sampsons for their escapades with the LRT contract route 217B, although they were originally a coach company specialising in excursions and tours from the Cheshunt, Waltham Cross and Hoddesdon areas. The business was founded in the mid sixties and as I lived in Cheshunt from 1970 to 1991 I was able to record their fascinating collection of secondhand single and double deck buses which were used on the many school and works contracts held by the company in the seventies. One of these contracts was for Tesco, whose headquarters are located in Delamere Road Cheshunt, and Sampsons vehicles were kept busy throughout the day ferrying workers back and forth. In fact their vehicles became an integral part of the bus scene in Cheshunt to such a degree that they were as familiar as conventional LT/LC vehicles.

Buses used in the mid seventies included three Bristol LDs new to Crosville, an ex London Transport GS, which survived right up to 1979, four ex Trent Leyland Atlanteans dating from 1959/60, four former East Kent AEC Reliances and even an ex City of Oxford AEC Bridgemaster.

In 1977 the double deckers were all replaced by a batch of six ex City of Nottingham Leyland Atlanteans which entered service in full Nottingham livery complete with fleet names, fleet numbers and legal lettering! As a boy of twelve I found all this very exciting, especially as there was also an ex Western SMT double decker running in Cheshunt around the same time in it's former owner's livery although I have never been able to ascertain who this one belonged to. It could have been on loan to Sampsons from Ensign pending the delivery of BTV 408B which arrived somewhat later than the other five.

The Nottingham Atlanteans stayed for two years, before returning to Ensign in 1979 in exchange for a batch of ex Trent Leyland PSU3s with Willowbrook bodies. The Atlanteans were to be the last double deckers in the Sampson fleet until 1986 when the seven DM/DMSs were acquired to work the 217B. 1979 also saw the arrival of eight Bedford YMT coaches from National Travel (South West) later joined by identical MOU 505R. A Bedford YRT had also been acquired from National Travel (East) two years earlier.

The mid seventies saw a rapid expansion of the fleet due to the acquisition of various other local coach operators; namely Alexandra of Enfield in 1974 and Brunts of Potters Bar in 1976. Brunts vehicles were immediately recognisable thanks to the company tradition of using registrations containing the number 510. Sampson pledged to continue this tradition where possible for new coaches but in the event only two ever subsequently appeared (SVW 510R and VTM 510S) the latter surviving right up to LCNE take over in 1989.

Grosvenor Coaches Ltd of Enfield, which was founded in 1928, was acquired jointly by Sampson, Lea Valley Coaches and Heaps & Planner in December 1977. Sampson and Lea Valley Coaches took over the road service licences whilst Heaps & Planner took over the vehicles and the school contracts.

Sampson Coaches were always immaculately turned out in a two tone blue livery trimmed with crimson and many of the luxury coaches carried imaginative names as part of the scrolled fleet name on each side e.g. *Sampson's King Of Hearts*, *Sampson's Adventurer* and *Sampson's Teletan*. Fleet numbers generally appeared encircled on the front of vehicles but not all coaches carried them. They were discontinued altogether about 1980/81.

In 1980 the elderly vehicles of a new associate company called Fleetville Bus and Coach Company began to appear on the streets of Cheshunt. I suspect that this outfit was set up in order to give the eldest son, Peter Sampson who was a former pupil of Turnford School, the experience of running his own bus and coach company. Fleetville vehicles were painted pillar box red with black trim. The fleet included three more ex East Kent AEC Reliances and another ex Trent Leyland PSU3/Willowbrook. The former Brookland Junior School minibus was also purchased in 1980 and unusually a couple of service vans were also numbered in with the PSV fleet.

Fleetville opened a new depot in Pindar Road, Hoddesdon on 5th January 1981 and on the same date began a lunchtime connection between the industrial estate and the town centre. Buses left Pindar Road at 1203, 1233, 1303 and 1333 and ran via Essex Road, returning from the Bell Public House in Burford Street at 1219, 1249, 1319, 1349 and 1415. A small timetable card

was issued which carried joint Sampson Coaches/Fleetville Bus Company names as Sampson actually held the road service licence. The service lasted until 15.1.82 when it was withdrawn without replacement. Around the same time, the six Sampson Coaches ex Trent Leyland PSU3s received the somewhat obscure new fleetname of "TREES". I have never been able to find out the true significance of this, but I can only conclude, if one pardons my dreadful pun, that this must have been another branch (or off-shoot perhaps?) of Sampsons.

Fleetville was absorbed into the main Sampson business in June 1984 when the parent company moved to a new depot in Essex Road, Hoddesdon, replacing the former depot in Alma Road, Ponders End and the small ex-Fleetville yard in Pindar Road. From its earliest days the company had been running a very successful travel agency business at 250 Turners Hill, Cheshunt and this continued.

Another thing which had been quietly continuing throughout the 1970s was a couple of little known stage services which had been taken over from Essex Coachways in March 1972. They ran to Hackney Wick Stadium on occasion of speedway meetings there and had been introduced by Essex Coachways on 21.3.69. One route ran from Leyton Town Hall via Ruckholt Road and Waterden Road whilst the other ran from Stratford Broadway (South Side) via Carpenters Road and Waterden Road. I do not know a precise withdrawal date by Sampsons, and although they were still running in January 1980 they had ceased by 1985.

Turning to the final chapter of the story, the tendered bus network, I shall omit the Sampson involvement on the ex Godfrey Davis Breach Barns service in the Waltham Abbey area and the free bus services to Brookfield Farm, as these have been covered in detail in my previous articles.

The first contracts gained were those offered jointly by LRT and Essex County Council for the 217B (Enfield to Upshire), the 250 (Waltham Cross to South Woodford) and the 251 (ex 250A from Waltham Cross to Upshire) all of which began on 24.5.86 using ex LT DM/DMSs on the 217B and secondhand Leyland Nationals on the 250/51. The buses were painted blue with red relief bands and had blue on yellow blinds. In addition the single deckers had red roofs. LT style route running numbers were carried employing white numbers on red plates. 11+ running numbers were used on the 250/51, 21+ on the 217B, whilst the Harlow area routes, gained at de-regulation, used 51+.

The Harlow involvement comprised the whole of the Sunday operation on routes T1,2,3,4,5 together with Monday to Friday off peak outer circular services T7 and T8 (which had previously been T7A and T7C with London Country). In addition, from 26.10.86, the Welwyn/Hatfield local services G1,2,3,4 and peak hour G11, G12 were won on contract from Hertfordshire County Council. The opportunity was taken to register some positioning journeys as commercial routes, these consisting of BS1 Hoddesdon (Essex Road) to Bishops Stortford (Monday to Friday peaks one journey each way), S1 Hoddesdon (Essex Road) to Waltham Cross (Monday to Friday am/midday/pm peaks) and S2 Hoddesdon (Essex Road) to Waltham Abbey (Monday to Friday peaks one journey each way).

With such a large network appearing almost overnight resources soon became overstretched and the cracks began to show after a very short time. Firstly the general unreliability of the DM/DMSs caused a lot of operating problems on the 217B and once the "G" routes were acquired staff and vehicles were required urgently. Although a batch of ex South Yorkshire PTE Fleetlines was purchased, the shortage further affected the 217B whose vehicles were used for other routes. A huge selection of loaned vehicles appeared on the route from January 1987 onwards and these included: Leyland Atlanteans TYJ 7/8S from Brighton Corporation, ULJ 260-2J from Bournemouth Transport, Leyland Fleetlines MRJ 231/7/8W from Southend Transport, Daimler Fleetlines ROK 456/58/61N, TOE 463/4N, NOC 600R and SDA 638S from West Midlands Travel (some of which were later purchased), OJD 216R (ex DMS 2216) from Davian Coaches, together with numerous DM/DMSs from Ensignbus, many of which were in overall advertising liveries. Many of these vehicles carried no blinds, merely a cardboard 217B in their windcreens, or in some cases just a plain 217 in the blind box resulting in much confusion for passengers.

Such was the unreliability of operation that Essex County Council suspended Sampson contracts for the Harlow Sunday services and awarded them to other operators from 3.5.87. The 217B and 250/51 were re-tendered but incredibly Sampsons won them back from 16.8.87. However from this date the 217B was re-numbered 317 to avoid confusion and the 250 altered so

that it no longer ran south of Loughton Station. A new route numbered 249 replaced the section to South Woodford Station.

The Welwyn/Hatfield routes were re-tendered by Herts CC with the G1,2,3 being won by other operators from 5.9.87. Sampsons did however retain the G4 to Panshanger on a 20 minute headway (not evenings), the peak hour G11, G12 and a new school route, the G22 from Birchwood Estate to Chancellors School which had previously been part of the G2.

Sampsons lost their remaining Harlow routes, the T7 and T8 from 1.11.87 when they were awarded to Golden Boy Coaches although Sampsons did pick up a single journey from Hertford to Bishops Stortford at 0740 on route 350 from the same date. This Herts CC contract proved to be extremely short lived as it passed to Eastern National on 21.12.87 after only seven weeks of operation!

1988 proved to be an equally bad year for Sampsons with the continuing need to hire vehicles to fulfil services due to unreliability of their own buses. The early part of the year saw ex Greater Manchester Fleetlines YNA 318/21/30/36M appear on the 317, moving directly from their leasing period at Harrow. Over the Easter period ex Greater Manchester Atlanteans WWH 44/54L were loaned. As if this wasn't enough, during the Summer the evening service had to be suspended due to increased vandalism and assaults on staff, extending to rifle shots being made at buses! Internal problems caused Sampsons to surrender the contract for route 317 which passed, at very short notice, to London Buses Ltd from 2.7.88.

Two months later, on 2.9.88, the G11, G12 were withdrawn without replacement although the G4 and G22 were retained on Herts CC contract.

Sampsons declined further to such an extent that the company was sold to London Country North East who agreed to purchase Sampsons in early January 1989; the official acquisition date being 1.3.89. Of course the great attraction of Sampsons was it's out-of-town industrial estate premises which allowed LCNE to cease the need to rent it's Hertford Garage in Fairfax Road from Parkdale Holdings which was vacated almost immediately.

The remaining contracts for the G4, G22, 250, 251 and Tesco work all passed to LCNE although the G4 was re-allocated from County Bus to Sovereign on 3.4.89 with the G22 following suit on 10.4.89. The positioning journeys on routes BS1, S1, S2 were never worked by County Bus and ceased upon take-over. Seventeen vehicles formed part of the deal including coaches VTM 510S and KBH 850/52V which dated from much happier times. All in all it was an inglorious end for a once proud company which had been a household name in the area for all the right reasons a decade or so earlier; indeed countless Cheshunt residents must have enjoyed day trips to Clacton on Sea or Walton on the Naze aboard a Sampson coach over the years!

A list of known Sampson vehicles will appear next month. This has been largely built up from my own observations made throughout the time I lived in Cheshunt. If anyone can offer any additional information please send it in, especially for vehicles numbered 1 to 20 which must have been in service in the 1960s and for which I have no details.



SOME REMINISCENCES OF A 1940s COMMUTER - AND GALLEYWOOD DUMP RE-VISITED
BY FRANK CUNNINGHAM DURBAN SOUTH AFRICA.

During the mid-1940s as a Mid-Essex Technical College student I commuted between my home at Langdon Hills and Chelmsford. The last stages of World War II and the continuing austerities in its aftermath made such commuting difficult, although in some ways interesting if not at times exciting.

The Eastern National service which passed Langdon Hills was the 51/53 Tilbury Ferry - Clacton/Harwich, but the first bus to pass there did not do so until 09h15 - no use to me at all since I had to be in Chelmsford in time for morning chapel, which commenced at five minutes to nine.

Therefore I had to leave home at six-thirty in the mornings (I am trying very hard to push visions of handkerchiefs and violins from my mind) and walk nearly two-and-a-half miles to Laindon Station, from where I would catch a "City" bus to Billericay, passing through the old villages of either Little or Great Burstead on the way. These vehicles would be either a six-wheeled Leyland "Tiger" LT, or if I managed to catch a slightly earlier departure, a four-wheel steering Leyland "Gnu" - mostly G1 (FGC593).

Eastern National sent three vehicles to Billericay in the mornings connecting with the "City" bus arrivals from Laindon. These were two double-deckers (usually Beadle rebodied AEC "Regents") and one single-decker which would be a Bristol J05G from Monday to Thursday and a Dennis "Lancet" on Fridays. As time progressed the Monday to Thursday slot was filled by a variety of Leyland LT2 "Lions", a lone Dennis "Lancet" which then carried a modified second-hand Strachen body (3695 - APP272) or one of the three AEC "Regals", and the Friday "Lancet" was supplanted by any of the Leyland PLSC3 "Lions." (The reason for the change of vehicle type on Fridays was that Friday was market day in Chelmsford and the increased demands on the Chelmsford depot fleet meant that it was necessary to press its oldest vehicles into longer-than-usual journeys).

These three buses left Billericay High Street at five past eight

and just got me to Chelmsford in time - unless of course, the weather was foggy.

The low octane "Pool" petrol in those times of austerity was unkind to the petrol-engined buses and the Dennis "Lancets" registered their displeasure at this kind of "fare" with a noisy rattling of tappets when first moving off. Coupled to the poorer petrol was a temporary licensing requirement for single-deck vehicles with conventional seating to carry up to a maximum of twelve standing passengers, whilst those which had been temporarily converted to perimeter ("Standee") seating up to a maximum of 20 standing passengers. Now Stock hill was not particularly steep but it had a couple of twists, and the PLSC3 "Lions" under these conditions would cause their drivers to drop down to first gear (using the awkward right-hand gear-shift) when ascending.

The return journey in the afternoon was much better for me and although classes finished at 15h55, the authorities took pity on me and allowed me to leave at half-past three, in time for me to catch the quarter-to-four hourly-service Tilbury Ferry bus which would take me direct to my alighting stop by the "Crown Hotel" at the top of Langdon Hills without having to "change horses." "They" apparently took into account my early morning start, the distance and the volume of daily homework assignments.

This arrangement worked very well for me from Mondays to Thursdays, but on the Friday market days it could be a disaster. Because few people ran cars in those days (or if they did, their petrol coupon allocation would not stretch to other than local journeys) farmers and smallholders came to market by bus from far and wide, and the queue for the quarter-to-four was something to experience (or rather not to experience) - sometimes up to about thirty people from as far away as Kent across the River Thames. When our bus emerged from beneath the railway station arch and entered the bus station it was already partially full, being an hourly through service from Colchester etc..

Our bus had a Relief (I believe the term is "duplicate" nowadays)

vehicle which went as far as Billericay - no help to me - and on two or three Fridays I have had to wait (here come the violins again) two-and-a-quarter hours for the quarter-to-six departure - the 4.45 being also full.

There was a "no-man's land" between the Chelmsford and Grays depot areas of service - the Chelmsford area extended as far as Billericay in that particular direction and the Grays area ended at Laindon. This was probably due to the licensing arrangements for the "City Coach" which as mentioned earlier, operated two services between Laindon and Billericay. Thus it seemed that the Chelmsford depot traffic regulators could (or would not) extend the normal relief beyond Billericay, a situation further aggravated by a shortage of suitable vehicles on Fridays. However on two occasions during my three years at Chelmsford the Friday afternoon rain-sodden queue grew angry and insisted on being provided for. On the first of these occasions we were grudgingly given a Dennis "Ace" centre-entrance coach (I recorded that event very carefully - it was 3612 - CIW208) and on the other occasion we were provided with Bristol K6B 3963 (MPJ24).

I have somehow managed to preserve records of those far-off days - now over fifty years ago - and the following is a synthesised account of a typical homeward journey for me.

The queuing point for my Tilbury Ferry bus was adjacent to that for the service 11 bus for Southend (although in those days Eastern National destination blinds did not display route numbers, unlike their "Westcliff-on-Sea" counterparts). This would leave ten minutes prior to the departure of my bus; generally the Southend bus would be Leyland double-decker 3559 (BTW498). It was also provided with a relief which went as far as Great Baddow; this was invariably a Leyland PLSC3 "Lion," and it was interesting to see the driver hand-crank the engine into life!

Shortly after this my bus would appear beneath the railway arch (hopefully it would be a Dennis "Lancet" but this eventuality became less frequent as the 1940s wore on) and draw up behind the already waiting relief to Billericay. During the first half of my stay at Chelmsford this relief would be either an AEC "Regent" or one of the

two remaining Thorneycroft XCs, which by then had received new ECW bodies and Bristol radiators. Later on the Billericay relief changed status to single deck - generally Dennis "Lancets" or one of the three AEC "Regals" allocated to Chelmsford.

Thus my journey home would begin at a quarter-to-four. In Roman times Chelmsford was known as "Caesaromagus" and the first recorded date of its present name is given as 1190 - literally a "ford across the Chelmer." But let us "fast-forward" a mere 750 years or so as my bus turned through 180° into Duke Street by the Bluebird Café, passed under the railway arch then turned right into Market Road and after passing the Technical College entered Tindal Square by Shire Hall and the Corn Exchange. We then continued down the High Street, passing the large stores of Luckin-Smith builders' merchants and Bonds of Chelmsford outfitters, then the "Regent" cinema and ballroom by Springfield Road on our left before going over the little humped-back stone bridge across the River Chelmer. Then again on the left stood Woolworth's store on the corner of Baddow Road. Here the High Street ended and the road ahead was known as Moulsham Street, the principal thoroughfare of a once-separate community from Chelmsford called Moulsham - originally known as "Mulesham" in 1065, which, according to "The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Place Names" was a corruption of "oemula" - a nick-name for "mule's muzzle." Moulsham Street was (and perhaps still is) characterised by its typically old Essex timbered houses on either side, most of which were shops at street level. However the upper storeys with their cottage windows reached out over the pavements towards each other. A little further on we came to the junction with London Road and on our left the impressive-looking St John's Church. Shortly after this we negotiated Widford roundabout (traffic circle to everyone over 40!) as we crossed over the London-Colchester arterial road.

At this point the B1007 road commenced - a route that the Tilbury Ferry bus followed for some 40 kilometres (or about 25 miles as we would have said then) to where it ended just west of Stanford-le-Hope. For a short distance this road was known as Wood Street, on the right-hand side of which were the large grounds of Chelmsford

Prison. At the top of Wood Street "hill" as it was called (although only a moderate incline) the road took a dog's-leg bend where Longstomps Avenue fell away to the left.

From here we passed through Galleywood and after another short incline reached the "Eagle" public house - which was not far from where the 4B town service between West Street and Galleywood End had its terminus. (The name "Galleywood End" was a sad reminder of earlier times when horse racing took place there). With the outbreak of the Second World War horse racing ceased at Galleywood, although the white railings around the track remained still intact. The track itself demarcated the periphery of a large flat area used in those difficult times for potato-growing. I remember during the potato-lifting season, teams of German POWs who were working near the road proudly holding up the largest specimens of their labours as we passed by!

Although there doesn't seem to be any record of Roman, Anglo-Saxon or Norman origin of Galleywood, there is an Old English word "galley," meaning "wooded or overgrown place." However, more to the point, the successive landlords of the Galleywood "Eagle" would have been on a "safe bet"

on race days, it being the only "watering-place" in the vicinity. It is interesting to wonder what arrangements for traffic were made at the two points where the B1007 bisected the course when racing was in progress. The long flat section of road across the race course was aptly referred to as "Galleywood Stretch" by the bus crews, and on occasions when more than one bus was travelling in the same direction at the same time it was a great temptation for the drivers to race one another!

At the end of "Galleywood Stretch" we passed through a small copse and then on our left was Galleywood Dump - more about which later on - and came to the Stock "Ship" public house on our left-hand side, a strange name for such an institution so far removed from any navigable water! From here the road twisted and turned until we arrived at the fine old village of Stock, so named in medieval times as a place where offenders of the people had their neck and arms clamped into large wooden "stocks" for a period of time arbitrarily decided upon

according to the severity of the crime committed, during which they would be pelted with anything that passers-by could lay their hands on! During the times I write about the remains of those old stocks were still surprisingly intact, as was also the old cast-iron pump on the village green.

Leaving Stock village we passed the old church at the top of Stock Hill, and then passing an old manor house with its fine grounds on our left as we descended.

A mile or two further on we came to the outskirts of Billericay, passing the privately-owned St John's school on our right, and then Billericay Hospital on our left. (My father was admitted there in the mid-1940s, and I recall when visiting him that the wards were heated by large unhealthy-looking combustion stoves -- a hang-over from Victorian days!). Then crossing over the LNER railway bridge we entered Billericay High Street where the official stopping place was outside "Vere's Boutique." The shops and houses on either side of the High Street were old -- some very old. The first recorded date of this place that I have been able to establish is 1313, when it was known as "Billerika"; no explanation of the origin of the name could be found, but it appears that at one time a grange belonging to the Roman Catholic Friary of Withern existed there. One old building which we passed on our right was then called "Ye Olde Tea Shoppe;" the date 1577 was deeply carved on a large wooden beam over its entrance, and story had it that a group of the Pilgrim Fathers once gathered there in King James the First's time to plan the voyage they would make to the "New World" in 1620. At the end of the High Street we came to "Sun Corner" as it was known -- after the "Sun" public house on our left which was opposite the impressive-looking Billericay Police Station, and crossed over the London-Brentwood-Southend road. Then on our right we would pass the Gas Light & Coke Company's works with its huge gasometer and a mile or two further on pass Laindon Common, also on our right. This was a relic of the Middle Ages where the villeins of nearby villages of Great and Little Burstead grazed their cows and pigs. Burstead, recorded as "Burgstede" at the beginning of the eleventh century was the site of a "burg" or old fort.

A little further on we approached Laindon itself at a place where our B1007 road took a sharp turn to the right, and at which point stood the (old) "Fortune of War" public house. The earliest record of the sprawling community of Laindon was just at the beginning of the eleventh century, when it was known by the Saxon name of "Ligeandune" - a "place near water." However the only watery place that I knew of in that area was what the locals called "The Wash," a point where water ran across Wash Road nearby the "Old Fortune" pub just mentioned. Whatever the source of this water was, it was understood that it formed part of the River Crouch catchment area.

About a half-mile further on we came to the junction with the A12 London-Southend arterial road, with the large "New Fortune of War" public house on our left. As we crossed the A12 we might have spotted a "Westcliff-on-Sea" 2A on its way to or from Romford; this was either an AEC "Regent" or a Bristol K5G - never for some reason a G05G.

Once on the Grays side of the arterial road we would pass Laindon Secondary School on our right (where I suffered miserably my two years of secondary education before being happily elevated to Chelmsford Tech). The main stop in this section of road (still the B1007) was by the Laindon Hotel, after which we passed Laindon Station on our left as we crossed over the LMS railway bridge. Shortly after this the long steep haul to the summit of Langdon Hills commenced and consisted of three hills which were narrow and winding and also poorly cambered. (Later on this section of road was widened and re-aligned - but that didn't occur until about six years or more later on). But at the time I am writing about all of the pre-war buses used on the Tilbury Ferry-Clacton route had to drop down to first gear at least once on the ascent. I remember that drivers of the Bristol L5Gs discovered that if they held on to second gear until virtual stalling point they could make a vigorous un-declutched smash into first which caused the vehicle to lurch violently; on some occasions this rash expedient didn't work, and we would all have to get out and walk up the hill! The row of local shoppers standing in the aisle would call out "Wait for it.....here it comes!" as they

anticipated the inevitable moment when they would be unceremoniously flung rearwards!

At about this point we would meet the shorter working journey from Grays to Laindon, which had also commenced its run at three forty-five; this would usually be a Dennis "Lancet" or a Bristol J05G, although there were a few occasions when it would be one of the PLSC3 "Lions" that were based at Grays depot.

And so we came to my alighting stop at the top of Langdon Hills by the "Crown" Hotel, opposite to which was the Langdon Hills Cricket Club ground and pavilion. As I alighted the conductor "buzz-buzzed" and I would watch my steed until it was out of sight as it continued towards its final destination.

The first recorded mention of Langdon Hills is 1273, when its inhabitants called it by the very apt Old English name of "Longdun" - "the long hill."

Now although this account of a typical homeward journey is complete, I will mention a few of the passing points of the Tilbury Ferry bus after I alighted. It would almost immediately pass a mid-Nineteenth century little red brick schoolhouse (long since converted to a private residence) and the water tower on its left-hand side, and the "new" St Mary's and All Saints' Anglican church - where I had been baptized - on its right, which I believe was built just about the turn of this century. (The "old" St Mary's, just off the bus route, was probably several hundred years old; by the 1940s it had long since discontinued to be used for worship, and sadly in its dilapidated state was seeing out its remaining days as funeral venue and graveyard sentinel). However an interesting point about this old church for me, as an amateur musician, was that like so many of the old parish churches, it had never had an organ, but had instead a "musicians' gallery" of the kind mentioned in Thomas Hardy's novel "Under the Greenwood Tree," where a few string players would endeavour to lead the congregation's singing efforts.

But back to the B1007, where the bus would descend the southern slope of Langdon Hills then wind its way upwards again to Hornon-on-the-Hill,

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH.