Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 739 November 2025



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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BRX25 SYZ


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Travel Norfolk
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BRX25 TFV

Essex Bus Magazine the journal of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group
Issue 739 November 2025



Above: A photo for Remembrance Day. Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini bodied 32673 (SN55 HFA) is the last Volvo B7TL in service in the country with First Bus. However, it is due for withdrawal when its MOT runs out around the end of October. Enviro 400 33825 (SN63 MYH) will remain with First Essex in Remembrance livery. 32673 is seen on route 51 in Head Street, Colchester on 18 October 2025. **Richard Delahoy**

Front Cover: Following last month's front cover of new Yutong E12 electric single-decker 65164 (YB25 VXL) the Yutong U11DD electric double-deckers have now also entered service. The first one was 30105 (YK75 LLF) on 3 October 2025, seen that day on route 300 at Eastfield Road, Noak Bridge. **Nick Street**

Right: Similar 30107 (YK75 LLJ) on route 25 at Eastwood Road, Rayleigh on 11 October. **Ian Dann**



Inside Front Cover: Two Central Connect Mercedes-Benz Sprinter / EVM Citylines. **Top**: 237 (RX25 SYZ) on route HL1 on 11 September 2025 at the Clock Tower, Hoddesdon. **Allan White**
Bottom: On the same day, 229 (RX25 TFV), with Norwich Park & Ride branding, on route 10 exiting Basildon Bus Station. **Nick Street**
More details and another photo of both vehicles on pages 23-25.

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Owen stocks a wide range of colour photos, please send an SAE for details.

Subscriptions
The calendar year subscription for 2025 is £29 for printed copies sent by post, or £20 for electronic pdf copies sent by e-mail. New members may join from any month, but subscriptions will always run to December from whichever month the member chooses, please ask for the relevant price.
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EBM Extra
EBM is published monthly. In addition, we aim to publish two Extras each year full of historical features. These are supplied to members free of charge, subject to funding.

Membership Records & Data Protection
A statement of our compliance with the GDPR is available on our website or by post. For any membership or Data Protection issues please contact Richard Delahoy, address above.

Reports, Articles & Photographs
Members' reports, articles and photos (prints, slides or preferably jpgs) are always welcome. Please send to the Editor or relevant Sub-Editor. The editors exercise discretion to publish contributions in full, in part or not at all and cannot guarantee publication in any particular month.

Target Dates for EBM 740

Reports to Sub-Editors	**22 November**
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	**28 November**
Dispatch by Printers on or before	**6 December**

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 29th and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the next month.

Views expressed in EBM do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group or officers. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy, but the Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors published.

Group Notices

Membership Renewals

Many thanks to the members who responded so quickly to last month's invitation to renew for 2026 and the e-mail notice. Enclosed in the envelope with this issue is a copy of the renewal form for those receiving the printed copy of the magazine and whose renewal had not been received by 24 October. Apologies to anyone who has renewed just after that date and before publication of this magazine - just dispose of the form. I look forward to receiving further renewals!

Richard Delahoy Membership Secretary / Treasurer

Membership News

Welcome to New Members
Kevin Williams, Tiptree - 1241
Stephen Holmes, Blackburn - 1242

Geoff Toon Collection - Items Available

Following the recent passing of Geoff Toon, the following items are available: assorted destination blinds, copies of Notices and Proceedings, some Almex and two Setright ticket machines in boxes. These are available for immediate disposal. If you are interested, please contact John Podgorski by email at johnpodgorski4@gmail.com for more details.

Group Meetings

Main Meetings

These (usually featuring a slide show) are on Saturday afternoons on a bi-monthly basis at **The Quaker Meeting House, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2QL**. 1330 for a 1400 start.

13 December 2025: Alan Osborne, 'Essex Buses of Yesteryear'. A miscellany of views of buses in Essex over 60 years from 1965.

We are looking for volunteers to present shows (slide or USB) at our bi-monthly Chelmsford meetings from February 2026 onwards. Something lasting approximately 90 minutes, but we can always have a couple of presentations at the same event if you're able to present something that may fill 45 minutes or so. If you're able to help, please contact Ian Ransom, details on page 2 under 'Service Revisions, etc.'

Dates for first half of **2026**: **21 February**, **11 April** (AGM, so 1300 for a 1330 start), **13 June**.

Social Meetings

Thursday afternoons **20 November** and **18 December 2025**.

Dates for the first half of **2026**: **22 January, 19 February, 19 March, 22 April , 21 May** and **18 June**.

At **'The Globe' Public House, Rainsford Road, CM1 2QL**, 1300 (lunch, optional) for 1400 (start of meeting) to 1700.

The Quaker Meeting House is a five-ten minute walk from Chelmsford Bus & Railway Stations. There is very limited on-site parking, accessed via Cedar Avenue West, we would ask that you leave these for those less able to walk. The meetings are being held jointly with our good friends at The Omnibus Society, Eastern & Southern Branch, who are very generously paying for the room hire so entry is FREE.

'The Globe' Public House is a couple of minutes past the Quaker Meeting House (coming from the stations) on the other side of the road. There is a car park but you must register your car at the terminal on the bar on arrival otherwise a penalty charge will apply.

Group members are also invited to attend a presentation by Bill Hiron, Omnibus Society President for 2025, at the **Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford CM1 1LN** (just round the corner from the stations), on **Saturday 29 November 2025**, 1400 for 1430.

Then on **Monday 19 January 2026** members are invited to a presentation by Roger French OBE DL MA, formerly Managing Director of Brighton & Hove Bus & Coach and now widely known for his Bus and Train User Blog on the internet. Roger will present the "Top 10 ways to discourage and the Top 10 ways to encourage bus passengers". 1800 for 1830 at the **Abbey Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London SW1 3BU**. Ten minute walk from Westminster and St. James's Park Underground Stations.

The Running Card

Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Saturday 15 November: Enfield Transport Bazaar. St Stephens Church Hall, Village Road EN1 2EY.
Saturday 15 November: Classic buses on TfL route 252 (Collier Row - Hornchurch, via Romford) in aid of Royal British Legion.
Sunday 16 November: Camden Town Transport Event. Vintage London buses on several routes in aid of Children in Need.
Saturday 29 November: Classic buses on TfL route 103 (Chase Cross - Rainham Station, via Romford) in aid of Children in Need.
Saturday 6 December: Zero2 Bus Museum opens at Poole Farm, Poole Street, Great Yeldham CO9 4HP. Also open Sunday 7th and for every subsequent December weekend. Route 721 link from Braintree Railway Station when museum is open.
Saturdays / Sundays 6/7 December, 13/14 December and 20/21 December: Ride the Lights. East Anglia Transport Museum, Carlton Colville NR33 8BL. 1500 to 1900.
Sunday 7 December: Christmas Cracker. Ipswich Transport Museum, Cobham Road IP3 9JD.
Saturday 13 December: Transport / Toy Bazaar. Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell KT17 1VF.
Thursday 1 January 2026: New Years Day Event. East Anglia Transport Museum, Carlton Colville NR33 8BL.
Thursday 1 January 2026: King Alfred Mini Running Day, The Broadway, Winchester.

For a comprehensive list of forthcoming events, with links to relevant websites for more information, see https://www.classicbuses.co.uk/++Events-diary.html. Events are published in good faith. However, the Group cannot be responsible for any changes due to future circumstances. Please check before travelling.

John Rugg



We are very sorry to have to record the death of John Rugg of Laindon, member 443, on 6 October 2025. We send our condolences to his friends and family. John was a lifelong bus enthusiast and supporter of the Omnibus Society as well as ENEG/EBEG, regularly attended our meetings and tours and contributed various items to our magazine, including itineraries for some of his days out by bus around Essex. He even appeared on the cover of EBN 659 (March 2019) standing alongside ex-Westcliff Bristol K AJN 825, both celebrating their 80th birthdays at the time. He was an avid bus user until ill-health curtailed his activities and also took a number of photos that we've used, including the mobile shops in Basildon that appeared in the most recent EBM Extra (9, Autumn 2025).

Richard Delahoy

John's trips didn't only involve Essex jaunts. On 6 April 1991 he ventured into London using a One Day Travelcard to sample some of the variety to be seen as tendering took hold of the capital's services. His bus trips comprised:

346	Upminster Station - Cranham & return	County Bus	MB932 (G932 WGS) Mercedes-Benz / Reeve Burgess
248	Upminster Station - Hornchurch, Wingletye Lane	Ensignbus	121 (G121 YEV) Leyland Olympian / Alexander
193	Wingletye Lane - Romford	Thamesway	225 (D225 PPU) Mercedes-Benz / Reeve Burgess
165	Romford - Rainham War Memorial	Ensignbus	288 (F288 NHJ) MCW Metrobus / MCW
103	Rainham War Memorial - Becontree Heath	Grey Green	LR105 (H105 GEV) Leyland Olympian / NCME
87	Becontree Heath - Barking	London Buses	T256 (GYE 256W) Leyland Titan
179	Barking - Chingford	Grey Green	LR109 (H109 GEV) Leyland Olympian / NCME

313	Chingford - Potters Bar	Grey Green	138 (F138 PHM) Volvo B10M / Alexander
298	Potters Bar - Palmers Green	Grey Green	132 (F132 PHM) Volvo B10M / Alexander
112	Palmers Green - Ealing Broadway	Atlas Bus	AB54 (E969 PME) Leyland Lynx
207	Ealing Broadway - Shepherds Bush	London Buses	M1422 (C442 BUV) MCW Metrobus
94	Shepherds Bush - Oxford Circus	London Buses	RML2293 (CUV 293C) AEC Routemaster
15	Oxford Circus - Aldgate	London Buses	RML2536 (JJD 536D) AEC Routemaster

John was enjoying an Essex Sunday Saver trip sometime in 1995 when he alighted in Braintree and photographed one of the less well known vehicles in the Hedingham fleet, L239 (BCJ 733V) **below**. A Ford R1114 with Duple C53F body, it had been new in November 1979 to Smiths of Ledbury but later ran for Freemans Travel of Fordham. When they ceased trading, it passed to Hedingham Omnibuses in November 1994, entering service the following February. It later gained fleet livery but was sold on in summer 1996. Freemans had operated the Sunday ECC contract for route 70 (Braintree to Colchester) and Hedingham took this over. The coach here is sandwiched between Harris Bus vehicles operating the special Sunday routes set up by Essex CC to encourage leisure travel across the county.



Follow Ups

EBM Extra 9 - V is for Viceroy
Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit writes:
May I say how much I enjoyed the latest Extra magazine, which, as usual, plunged me into nostalgia. I still have a Viceroy 'Tim' ticket from my schooldays, when two of my pals and I travelled to Cambridge in search of Premier Travel buses. We went by way of Eastern National 33, Viceroy, and Eastern Counties 112. The driver of the 0800 ex Dunmow to Walden was reluctant to issue us with our return tickets, assuring us that he would remember us on the way back,

rendering tickets "unnecessary". We insisted that we wanted them as souvenirs, and he grudgingly relented. When Viceroy found the service to be financially unsustainable in 1969, I did wonder if he had contributed to that outcome! In addition, I once spent time wandering around the farm where Viceroy's redundant vehicles were put out to grass.



Right: Two such coaches in the yard in Freshwell Street, opposite the garage. Albion FHK 199, and an unidentified Bedford, c late 1963 / early 1964. **Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit**

The mention of Willebrew tickets brought back a conversation with my late father, who used the machines when he was a conductor with Eastern National before and after the Second World War. The machines were cumbersome, and accuracy was required in cutting the ticket in the exact place, making it slow in operation. Chelmsford depot had a Wednesdays and Sunday duty operating a special service between Wickford Railway Station and Runwell Hospital. This tended to be very busy, with visitors arriving on the same train and heading for the bus. As it was only a short distance, several tickets were "cut" whilst the bus waited at Wickford, so it was just a question of dishing out the pre-prepared tickets. Care had to be taken that sufficient tickets were ready, but not too many, as any extras would have to be paid for by the conductor.

I was discussing this one day in the canteen with one of the long service employees. He said that it was common practice when a conductor anticipated a busy trip. However, Charlie went one step further. He would cut the tickets short, i.e., less than the expected fares that he would be issuing. He always carried a small, very sharp, pair of scissors. He would then cut an extra piece, up to the value that would be required by the passenger. The cut had to be extremely accurate, as a suspicious Inspector would run his finger along the edge of the ticket, looking for any undulation where the new cut commenced. In that way the company generously paid for tea and toast for Charles and his driver.

EBMs 730 & 734 - 'Love Your Bus'

The Love Your Bus Grant is part of the BSIP+ (Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus) funding allocated to Essex County Council by the Department for Transport. To apply for the grant, parish and town councils were asked to submit projects which would increase passenger numbers, improve service frequency and coverage, and attract new users. Highlights so far, provided by Travel Essex, are:

New and Improved Journeys

- Burnham-on-Crouch Town Council - extra morning journeys added to the 331 service into Chelmsford, helping commuters get into town more easily.
- Ingatestone & Fryerning Parish Council - increased weekday (M-F) frequency on the 351 service between Chelmsford and Warley.
- High Easter Parish Council - introduced short additional journeys twice a week on the 17/18 services between Chelmsford and Chignall.
- Mayland Parish Council - rerouting and retiming of the 31 and 331 services in the mornings and evenings, plus social media promotion.
- Shalford Parish Council and neighbouring parishes (Finchingfield, Great Bardfield, Panfield, Rayne, Salings and Wethersfield) have received funding for an additional vehicle (50 hours per week, Monday - Friday). Since the launch of the North Travel Zone, DigiGo has already seen a 60% increase in passenger numbers compared with the previous fixed-route service.
- Sheering Parish Council - expanded the 347 service to cover Harlow, supported by local marketing and promotion.

Marketing and Promotion

- North Weald Bassett Parish Council - launched a bus awareness campaign to encourage more residents to use local routes.
- Woodham Walter Parish Council - ran a targeted advertising campaign to promote the 99 service.
- Rayne Parish Council - delivered promotion and marketing for the 133 service to raise awareness locally.

Together, these nine projects represent a total investment of over £237,000 and are already making bus travel more visible, reliable, and tailored to community needs.

Looking Ahead

The next round of funding, Love Your Bus 2, opens this autumn. To make it easier for Parish and Town Councils to apply, Travel Essex simplified the application form and introduced weekly online Q&A and engagement sessions, which began on 4 September 2025. These sessions are an opportunity to ask questions, explore ideas, and get support in shaping projects that benefit local passengers.

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739 for EBM 739



Above: Carters Heritage Buses **739** (K**739** ODL) in New Road, Mistley on 13 April 2016, working 1545 East Bergholt High School - Ardleigh 193. A Leyland Olympian with Northern Counties body new to Southern Vectis in 1993, in Wilts & Dorset livery. Acquired by Carters Coach Services from Go South Coast in 2015. Transferred to Carters Heritage Buses with service 193 in April 2016, prior to the sale of Carters Coach Services to Ipswich Buses in May 2016.
Robert Appleton

Service Revisions

Ian Ransom

9 July 2025

8A (W only) Chelmsford Retail Market - Rayleigh Station **Central Connect**. NEW SERVICE on Wednesdays only, in partnership with Rettendon Parish Council, to provide a service to Hayes Country Park (described as Luxury Park Homes). Initially on an experimental basis from 9 July to 24 September.
Further to EBM 736, this service was still running on Wednesday 22 October so its operational period has obviously been extended. More details to follow.

3 September

A (Sch only) Little Canfield, Warwick Road - Bishop's Stortford, Birchwood High School **Acme Bus**. Revised timings. Registered closed school service.
FHS1 (Sch only) Felsted, Watchhouse Green - Stansted, Forest Hall School **Acme Bus**. Revised route and timetable. Extended to start at Felsted, Gransmore Green. Registered closed school service.
FHS2 (Sch only) Takeley, Four Ashes - Stansted, Forest Hall School **Acme Bus**. New registered closed school service.
SW1 (Sch only) Great Chesterford, Rose Lane - Saffron Walden County High School **Acme Bus**. Revised timings. Registered closed school service.
SW3 (Sch only) Little Walden, Bell Cottages - Saffron Walden County High School **Acme Bus**. New registered closed school service.
7A (Sch only) Socketts Heath, The Oak - St Clare's Academy. Service deregistered by **Keane Travel** and registered by **Ensignbus**.
7B/C (Sch only) Socketts Heath, The Oak - Mossbourne Portside Academy and Mossbourne Fobbing Academy. Service deregistered by **Keane Travel** and registered by **Ensignbus**.
10 (Sch only) Lance Corporal Nicky Mason Way - William Edwards School . Service deregistered by **Keane Travel** and registered by **Ensignbus**.

26 October

The opening date of Beaulieu Park Railway Station, Chelmsford, which has a bus interchange. This is the first new station on the Great Eastern mainline in over a century.
73/A/B (M-S) Chelmsford Bus Station - Maldon, Cherry Gardens / Lower Plume School **First Essex**. Revised route and timetable. Most journeys revised to operate via Beaulieu Park Railway Station Bus Interchange. In Maldon, revised to operate direct via Spital Road, rather than operating via Fambridge Road, Washington Road and Acacia Drive.
C2 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Broomfield Hospital **First Essex**. On M-F, the 0529 from Skerry Rise revised to depart at 0524.
C3 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - North Melbourne, Wickfield Ash **First Essex**. Revised M-S timetable.
C8 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Beaulieu Park, Shardelow Avenue **First Essex**. Revised timetable, with most journeys extended to Beaulieu Park Railway Station Bus Interchange via White Hart Lane and Colchester Road.
C9 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Beaulieu Rydes **First Essex**. Revised timetable, with most journeys extended to Beaulieu Park Railway Station Bus Interchange via Beaulieu Parkway.
C10 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Channels, Brassie Wood **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-F (between c0900 and c1500 reduced from every 20 minutes to every 30 minutes) and Su (remains hourly but at different times) to better co-ordinate with the revised timetable on **C9** (note the **C10** has NOT been extended to Beaulieu Park Railway Station Bus Interchange).
C11 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - North Springfield, Goldenacres **First Essex**. Revised timetable, with most journeys extended to Beaulieu Park Railway Station Bus Interchange via White Hart Lane and Colchester Road.

3 November

80/A (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Boxted, Cooks Hill / Dedham, Marlborough Head **Konectbuses**. Revised timetable.
81/A (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Dedham, Marlborough Head / Manningtree Railway Station **Konectbuses**. Revised route and timetable, revised to operate via Olympic Boulevard and Bus Rapid Transit System (see below) rather than Turner Road.
89 (M-S) Halstead Conies Road - Great Yeldham, The Green **Konectbuses**. Revised timetable, with additional school day journeys introduced.

625 (Sch only) Chelmsford, Wood Street - Southend High School for Boys **First Essex**. Morning journey advanced from 0655 to 0647 to allow for additional running time.

6 December
721 (Event days only) Braintree Railway Station - Zero2 Bus Museum **Great Yeldham Buses**. Six journeys each way, in conjunction with museum open days, weekends only from 6 to 28 December.

31 December
826 (Sch only) Castle Hedingham, The Bell - Colchester Schools **Flagfinders**. Service withdrawn. (Last day is last day of Autumn Term.)

5 January 2026
331 (Sch only) Braintree, Kings Park Village - Great Dunmow, Helena Romanes School **Central Connect**. Revised timetable.
333 (Daily) Braintree Bus Interchange - Stansted Airport Coach Station **Central Connect**. Revised timetable and converted back to single deck operation to improve punctuality. In addition, the school journeys via Helena Romanes School will operate into the school grounds.

With thanks to Ian Barlex.

Colchester Bus Rapid Transit System
A recent press release from Essex Highways

Works on the new rapid transit lane and walking and cycling route along Colchester's Northern Approach Road have been completed, with the first buses soon to be using the new facilities.

The new infrastructure stretches from Mill Road to Bruff Close. It links existing bus priority lanes to the north and south and includes technology to enable buses to trigger signals and gain priority over other traffic. This will allow them to avoid queues to proceed rapidly and unimpeded along the corridor.

The new lane will initially be used by Park and Ride and local bus services ahead of new rapid transit services running across the city once the first garden community homes are built.

The new bus lane was funded as part of a successful £99.9 million bid to the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund. The planned route travels from the A12 Park and Ride to the University of Essex and the new Garden Community due to be developed close by. With stops along its route and the ambition to deliver services every few minutes, this will connect new and existing residents with key destinations including the hospital, railway station, city centre and university.

Suffering from a number of initial delays, the works were finally due to be completed earlier this summer. However, sections of the route needed to remain closed following the discovery of damaged drainage.

The works have also seen the creation of a dedicated high-quality new footpath and cycle track, enhanced boarding areas and a large-scale landscaping programme.

And with priority measures, modelling indicates that, once operational, the rapid transit will provide a 35% journey time saving when travelling between the Park and Ride and the city centre and 20% between the University and the city centre.

Once fully operational, in the future users can expect to see services unlike anything else in the city, with distinct vehicles, unique branding and modern ticketing and stops using the latest technologies.

With vehicle technology evolving at pace, we are also exploring different types of vehicles. Elsewhere in the country, for example, the West Midlands Sprint is introducing new hydrogen-based vehicles, while the Belfast Glider uses a diesel-electric engine.

Further information is available at https://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/highway-schemes/colchester-schemes/colchester-rapid-transit

Colchester

Transfer In

Enviro 200 4014 (GN58 BTX), B38F, collected from Maidstone (Arriva Kent & Surrey) on 11 October 2025. This is in old turquoise 'cow horns' livery. It entered service from Colchester on 13th.

Southend

Transfer In

Optare Versa V1100 4228 (KX62 JTV) arrived from Ware on 17 October 2025. It is being prepared for MOT for service. It is in current light blue livery. This bus had briefly operated in Southend in June 2014 when it was on loan to provide float cover for Southend Versas undergoing modification.

Transfers Out

6502 (SN66 WHV), the only Enviro 400 MMC left that was not in a special livery, has moved to Maidstone. It last ran in Southend on 21 October.
6506 (SN66 WJA), in Remembrance livery, was also due to go to Maidstone over the weekend of 25-26 October, confirmation next month.

Harlow

Acquired Vehicles

Further to last month, it is confirmed that all of 4137-4140 have seatbelts. Other recently acquired Enviro 200 MMCs 4135-6/41 do not have seatbelts.

Transfers In

Further to EBM 735 where it was reported that Optare Versa 4217 (KX61 KHB) was received from Ware over the weekend 31 May-1 June 2025 with mini ADL Enviro 200 4008 (YX61 FZN) moving to Ware in exchange, 4008 returned to Harlow in late September. Its last day in service at Ware was 24th and its first day back in service at Harlow was 30th.

Further to last month where it was reported that ADL Enviro 200 4010 (YX61 FZD) entered service from Harlow on Wednesday 24 September, transferred from Ware where it had last worked on 22nd, of note is that this vehicle had only been in service at Ware from 6 September, before that it had been at Hemel Hempstead. Like 4008, this is a mini version, both were new with dual doors to First Capital (since converted to single door). However, 4010 last worked on 3 October. It was seen being towed towards the M11 on 13th and its current status is unclear.

Transfers Out

Optare Solo 1457 (KE04 PZF) to Hemel Hempstead on 10 October 2025, it last ran in Harlow the day before. This bus was new to Harlow as 2457 and has worn original Arriva livery, Network Harlow and Interurban (turquoise 'cow horns' which later became standard livery). Unfortunately, we received a false report in EBM 737, it did not receive white LED blinds at the front and retains orange. This was the last standard Solo in the fleet, only Solo SR 1519 remains.

Optare Versas 4230 (KX62 JVW) and 4243 (KX13 DHN) to Ware (4230 last ran in Harlow 19 September, first day in service from Ware 13 October and 4243 last ran in Harlow 29 September, first day in service from Ware 1 October). 4243 had only been received from Hemel Hempstead on 14 September this year, as reported in last month's EBM.

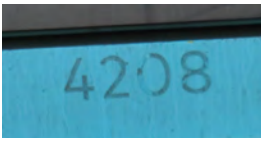
Last month it was reported that after moving to Hemel Hemsptead, Optare Solo 1458 (KE04 PZG) was withdrawn for scrap on 24 September after breaking down twice. This report may have been premature, as, according to Bustimes, it has been used in service spasmodically on 2, 3 & 8 October. However, it is possible the Bustimes reports are not correct.

With thanks to John Card, Danny Devine, John Podgorski, Keith Sadler, Steve Thompson and LOTS.

Right: Enviro 200 MMC 4110 (SN17 MXJ) at Heathrow Central Bus Station loading for service 724 to Harlow on 3 October 2025. A number of passengers were boarding with suitcases but these buses don't have any luggage racks. Also, driver changeover occurs at Heathrow. **Paul Harvey**



Below: The ghost of Optare Versa 4208 (YJ61 CJU). As reported in EBM 732, 4208 was withdrawn following engine failure, it was last used on 10 February this year. **Nigel Clark** was somewhat surprised to see the number displayed on the back of a Versa on 1 October 2025. It turned out that the bus was 4240 (KX13 DHL) with a replacement rear engine cover. It is seen at Rayleigh Library that day.





New Vehicles

Yutong U11DDs: 30103 (YK75 LLC) delivered to Basildon on 3 October 2025, 30105 (YK75 LLF) c2nd, 30107 (YK75 LLJ) c2nd, 30109 (YK75 LLN) c24th, 30116 (YK75 LLW) c8th, 30119 (YK75 LME) 23rd, 30121 (YK75 LMJ) 8th, 30122 (YK75 LML) c12th, 30123 (YK75 LMM) c12th, 30124 (YK75 LMO) 14th, 30125 (YK75 LMU) c17th, 30126 (YK75 LMV) c20th.

Yutong E12s: 65140 (YK75 LHZ) delivered to Basildon c16 October 2025, 65144 (YK75 LJF) 24th, 65145 (YK75 LJJ) c22nd, 65151 (YK75 LJX) c2nd, 65152 (YK75 LJY) c1st, 65153 (YK75 LJZ) 14th, 65156 (YK75 LKD) 15th, 65157 (YK75 LKE) c7th, 65158 (YK75 LKF) 24th, 65160 (YJ75 LKJ) 8th, 65161 (YJ75 LKL) 3rd, 65162 (YJ75 LKM) 17th, 65163 (YJ75 LKN) c20th.

Some delivery dates (marked c) are approximate, these are the latest dates they were delivered, but they may have arrived one or two days earlier.

Dates of entry into service: 30103 6 October, 30105 3rd, 30107 8th, 30109 25th, 30116 9th, 30119 23rd, 30121 10th, 30122 13th, 30123 13th, 30124 15th, 30125 17th, 30126 21st, 65140 17th, 65144 25th, 65145 23rd, 65151 3rd, 65152 2nd, 65153 14th, 65156 17th, 65157 8th, 65160 10th, 65161 7th, 65162 17th, 65163 21st.

Therefore, 30105 was the first electric double-decker to enter service, as illustrated on the front cover.

Further to last month, 65141 entered service on 1 October, 65143 on 30 September and 30114 on 11 October.

Acquired Vehicles

67752	SN62 APF	SFD1C8AR2CGG30726	C312/2	B41F	02/13	First Glasgow (Number 1)
67776	SN62 AXU	SFD1C8AR2CGG30701	C314/4	B41F	01/13	Midland Bluebird

ADL E30D / Enviro 300. Acquired from First Eastern Counties (Ipswich) on 4 October 2025. In blue Ipswich Park & Ride livery. 67756 entered service on route C1 on 10th, but 67752 had yet to enter service when we went to print.

Allocation Changes

BN-Basildon; CF-Chelmsford; CR-Colchester; HH-Hadleigh; DS-Driving School; FG-First Group cascade (to / from another First company); oos-out of service.

Period 6 2025/26 (24 August - 27 September)

Additional to EBM 738

33504 BN (oos)-Disposal, 33551 BN (oos)-Disposal, 33552 BN (oos)-Disposal, 37135 CR (oos)-CF (oos)

Correction to EBM 738

47648 should have been BN-FG not HH-FG.

Period 7 2025/26 (28 September - 25 October)

30103 New-BN, 30105 New-BN, 30107 New-BN, 30109 New-BN, 30114 BN (oos)-BN, 30116 New-BN, 30119 New-BN, 30121 New-BN, 30122 New-BN, 30123 New-BN, 30124 New-BN, 30125 New-BN, 30126 New-BN, 33418 BN-Disposal, 33546 BN-Disposal, 33548 BN-Disposal, 33555 BN-Disposal, 33557 BN-Disposal, 33558 BN-BN (oos), 33563 BN-BN (oos), 33568 BN-Disposal, 33572 BN-Disposal, 33574 BN-Disposal, 33674 CR (oos)-CR, 33696 BN-CR, 33705 CF (oos)-CF, 33985 BN (oos)-BN, 34442 CR-CR (oos), 34424 CF-CR, 34451 HH-HH (oos), 34453 HH-HH (oos), 34458 HH-HH (oos), 36841 CF (oos)-CF, 36842 CF (oos)-CF, 37134 CR-FG, 37136 CR-FG, 44001 BN-BN (oos), 44914 CF-CF (oos), 47596 BN-FG, 47602 CF (oos)-CF, 47606 CF-CF (oos), 47630 CF-CF (oos), 47652 BN-FG, 47654 BN-FG, 47669 BN-FG, 63167 BN-FG, 63168 BN-FG, 63169 BN-FG, 63312 CR-CR (oos), 63329 BN-FG, 63331 BN-FG, 63340 BN-HH, 63342 BN-HH (loan)-CR, 63343 BN-CR, 63344 BN-CR, 63372 BN-CR, 63383 BN-HH, 65140 New-BN, 65141 BN (oos)-BN, 65143 BN (oos)-BN, 65144 New-BN, 65145 New-BN, 65151 New-BN, 65152 New-BN, 65153 New-BN, 65156 New-BN, 65157 New-BN, 65158 New-BN (oos), 65160 New-BN, 65161 New-BN, 65162 New-BN, 65163 New-BN, 67164 CF (oos)-CF, 67736 CF-CF (oos), 67752 FG-CF (oos), 67760 CF-CF (oos), 67776 FG-CF, 69515 CR-CR (oos)

Many of these are the allocation of the new electric buses and consequent cascades / withdrawal of older vehicles.

63342 worked from HH from 17 to 24 October inclusive before moving on to CR.

As reported in Period 6, 47669, 63329 and 63331 moved temporarily from Colchester to Basildon on 31 August, these have now moved to their intended depot of Ipswich.

Disposals
September 2025: 33504, 33551 and 33552 not confirmed where to, but given other recent disposals from Basildon including those below, probably removed from Basildon by PVS for scrap.
4 October: 47669, 63329, 63331 from Basildon to First Eastern Counties at Ipswich.
8 October: 33548, 33568 removed from Basildon by PVS for scrap.
9 October: 33574 removed from Basildon by PVS for scrap.
12 October: 47652, 47654 from Basildon to First Cymru.
16 October: 33418 removed from Basildon by PVS for scrap.
17 October: 63167, 63168 from Basildon to First Eastern Counties at Norwich.
Mid-October (by 18th): 33546, 33555, 33557, 33572 removed from Basildon by PVS for scrap.
18 October: 37134, 37136 from Colchester to First Eastern Counties at Norwich.
24 October: 63169 from Basildon to First Eastern Counties at Norwich.
24 October: 47596 from Basildon, to where to be confirmed.

Further to EBM 737, 37037 and 37054 were removed from Quayside Depot, Colchester by PVS for scrap on 18 August 2025.

Next Stop Announcements
Correction to last month, the orange LED screens fitted to those buses that did not already have them have two line displays, not one.

Around the Depots
All vehicles listed below allocated to relevant depot except where stated. All dates October 2025 except where stated.

General
As has now become an annual tradition, in October bus blinds have been switching from normal displays to showing 'Happy Halloween' with a pumpkin on the rear route number display. The latter obviously works better on buses with orange displays rather than white!

Colchester
StreetLite 47430, in Shuttles red livery, has received a super rear advert for Colchester Institute.

A new scrap line has started to appear at the rear of the depot yard. Rather newer vehicles in it than previously, 63312, 63333 and 69515 all VOR awaiting new engines. Also there is Airlink liveried 34422, which was hit side on by a lorry at Poplar Nurseries, Marks Tey whilst on route X20 on 26 September. The middle three bays between the wheel arches were taken out, fairly severe damage, it is now awaiting assessment and will probably be sent away for repair, so is long term VOR. 34424 transferred from Chelmsford to Colchester on 17 September to replace it, see photo on page 17. Further to last month, 33674 returned to service on 10 October.

47656 (17th), 67197 (30 September, 20th, 24th) and 69520 (7th) single-deckers on 320.
63341 on X20 (4th, evening).

Chelmsford
Further to last month, 33705, which had got stuck under Duke Street Railway Bridge on 20 August, was indeed repairable and it returned to service on 17 October.

Airlink Scania 36841 returned to service on 8 October after being out of use since being in an RTC on 28 March this year (as reported in EBM 732). Similar 36842 returned to service on 1 October after being out of use since 21 June.

33656 (30 September, 1st, 8th, 13th), 33705 (20th, 21st), 33714 (21st) and 33730 (24th) unusual non MMC Enviro 400s on X30. See photo on page 16.

67171 unusual shuttles red livery vehicle on X30 (13th).

67406, in Ipswich Reds livery, no longer has a white old style f symbol on the front (see photos in EBM 727), but at some time has gained old style pink 'f symbol / Essex' by the entrance doors (**right)**. When seen at Chelmsford Bus Station on 13 October 2025, having arrived on the 1723 351 from Warley, on one of the cycles through the via points it showed "Funded by 'Love Your Bus'", even though only three journeys each way M-F are so funded, and the 1723 isn't one of them.





Basildon

As noted above, 30105 was the first electric double-decker to enter service on 3rd. This was followed by 30103 on 6th. Nick Street went to Basildon Hospital that day to see 30103 on the 0855 ex Lakeside. It arrived at 1022, 27 minutes late and behind Enviro 400 33555 (SN58 CGF) which was also on the 100 and should have arrived 20 minutes after 30103. 30103 was terminated at the hospital and all its passengers transferred to 33555. See photo on page 16. There did not appear to be anything wrong with 30103 and after a short visit to the depot it was put on to the B1.

One of the Yutong U11DDs was used on a University Open Day shuttle in Sheffield (where they are being tested prior to moving to Essex) in mid-October.

44001 on 251 (12th, its last day in service). 63344 a long StreetLite on 9 (11th).
33425 & 33563 unusual double-deckers on 251 (19th).

Preservation News

Wes Tierney has acquired new to Eastern National Bristol VR / ECW 3000 (CPU 979G) from the Blackwater Preservation Group for continued preservation. He intends to restore it to the green & cream dual purpose livery that it carried in its early years in service. He also hopes to replace the current side by side front destination gear with the original T shape display (it already has the correct inverted T at the rear).

Ian Mahoney has acquired new to Eastern National Bristol LS 1237 (859 ETW), also from the Blackwater Preservation Group, for continued preservation, initially focusing on repairing the existing accident damage to the front nearside corner suffered on one of the Blackwater driving experience days a couple of years or so ago.

Another Blackwater Preservation Group vehicle, the Westcliff Motor Services liveried ex First Essex Transbus Trident / President 33191 (LT52 XAB) has recently been offered for sale for £5,000.

Outstanding news is the acquisition of new to Eastern National Bristol K / ECW MPU 21 (3960 / 1296 / 2224) by the Zero2 Bus Museum, Great Yeldham. This bus later worked for Matchbox Toys (Lesney) as a staff bus to their factory and it is reported that it will be restored in their livery of blue with yellow band (as illustrated on page 32 of EBM 734).

With thanks to Richard Delahoy, David Edwards, Paul Harvey, John Lidstone, William Morrison, Gareth Norris, John Podgorski, Derek Stebbing, Roger A Smith, Nick Street, Rob Webb, Bus Lists on the Web, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.



Right: Autumn leaves. StreetLite 63161 ((SN64 CHX) on route 28 in London Road, Leigh-on-Sea on 8 October 2025. **John G Lidstone**

First Essex News in Pictures

Enviro 300s

Two former Eastern Counties Ipswich Park & Ride vehicles in Chelmsford on 9 September 2025. 67763 (SN62 AUK) in Ipswich Reds livery on route 333 in the bus station and 67775 (SN62 AXO) in corporate livery passing the railway station on route 371. Although when used on route C1 they have large final destination displays without via points, as can be seen vias are used on other routes. As reported in EBM 734, 67775 has its (small) nearside fleet name unusually in the front nearside window.
Both **David Bell**



Both vehicles were previously illustrated in EBM 734.



A third former Ipswich Park & Ride Enviro 300, acquired in October 2025, is 67776 (SN62 AXU), still in Park & Ride livery, in Chelmsford Bus Station on route 331 on 15 October.
William Morrison



Note, all three buses have non-standard nearside route numbers.

Enviro 400s

Original style Enviro 400s are relatively rare on route X30 (see page 13). 33656 (SN12 ADU) on 1 October 2025 at Eastwood Rise, Leigh-on-Sea.
John G Lidstone



33414 (WA56 FTK) on route 25 at Rayleigh Road / Brooklands Avenue, Eastwood on 7 October 2025.
John G Lidstone



33412 and 33413 from this ex-First West of England batch were the first double-deckers to receive Essex Bus green livery in January 2022, as illustrated in EBM 694. 33414 followed in April that year. 33414 ended up as the last double-decker from Basildon to operate in this livery.

Enviro 400 33555 (SN58 CGF) in Essex Bus livery, on route 100 at Basildon Hospital on 6 October 2025. Behind it is one of the buses that replaced it, in the livery that is replacing Essex Bus, electric Yutong U11DD 30103 (YK75 LLC) in First Bus corporate livery on its first day in service. More info on page 14.
Nick Street



33555 was withdrawn after service on 9 October and towed away by PVS by 18th.

Enviro 400 MMCs

Acquired Enviro 400 33811 (YX63 LJY) seen when with its original owner, First Eastern Counties, allocated to Great Yarmouth, in Coastlink livery on route X1 to Lowestoft at Norwich Bus Station on 19 May 2023….
Robert Appleton



… and with First Essex after repaint into corporate livery on route 372 at Chelmsford Bus Station on 30 September 2025.
Derek Stebbing



As noted on page 13, 34424 (SN17 MTX) transferred from Chelmsford to Colchester on 17 October 2025 to replace accident damaged sister 34422. It is seen the next day on route X20 in Head Street, Colchester. Note, 'Chelmsford', 'Southend Airport' and 'Southend' have been removed from above the drivers cab and entrance doors as these refer to route X30, these places are not served by the X20. However, the side advert remains mainly incorrect - it still has X30 as serving Great Dunmow and not X10; from the 5 January 2025 service changes the majority of X30 journeys no longer serve Great Dunmow whereas most X10 journeys now do.
Richard Delahoy



As it had been:



StreetLites

30 August 2025 was the last day of service 21 to Landwick. From 1 September, it has run to Shoeburyness, East Beach instead. StreetLite 47528 (SN64 CNF) heading to Great Wakering & Landwick Cottages on the last day, in Broadway, Leigh-on-Sea. Photo taken from the top deck of Ensignbus 364 (MX58 DXS).
John G Lidstone



As noted above, StreetLites 47669, 63329 and 63331 have moved to Ipswich after spending September 2025 (and the first three days of October) at Basildon on a short term allocation from Colchester. 47669 (SN15 ACV) brought some variety to BN, still being in as acquired Southampton City Red livery. It is seen on its first day operating from BN, 1 September, at Brentwood Station having arrived on route 9.
Adam Kelleher



Four red StreetLites together at Quayside Depot, Colchester on 28 September 2025. Left to right: 47668 (SN15 ACU), 47421 (SK63 KMJ), 47430 (SK63 KNB) and 47666 (SN15 ACJ), all directly or indirectly ex First Hampshire & Dorset in Southampton City Red livery. The outer two still in that livery (albeit 47666 has Shuttles red bumpers), the middle two were repainted into Shuttles red soon after acquisition.
David Edwards



New Yutong E12s

65164 (YB25 VXL) on the 1720 service 300 to Basildon on 24 September 2025. Photo taken from Platform 2 of Chelmsford Railway Station showing the roof profile.
Derek Stebbing



65165 (YK75 LKP) on route 22 at Tarpots Corner on 25 September 2025 being overtaken by StreetLite 63169 (SN64 CJV) on the same route.
John G Lidstone

On 24 October, 63169 moved to Norwich.



65164 (YB25 VXL) also on route 22, in a colourful Basildon Bus Station on 26 September 2025. StreetLite 47697 (LV22 HVZ) in Shuttles red on route 28 is behind, plus Essex Bus green and Urban 2 liveries are also visible as is Stephensons.
Nick Street



New Yutong U11DDs

30105 may have been the first Yutong U11DD to enter service (see front cover) but 30114 (YK75 LLU) was the first delivered, a fortnight earlier and without fleet names and other vinyls, for testing and driver familiarisation. It is seen leaving Basildon Bus Station on 30 September 2025. It finally entered service on 11 October, with vinyls added.
Nick Street

Last month's front cover, plus further photos inside, showed Yutong E12 65164 on route 25 at Southend Travel Centre on 23 September 2025, the historic first day of electric buses running in Southend for the first time in 71 years, since the last SCT trolleybus ran on 28 October 1954 on the 'Western Circular'. Then on 7 October, the first double deck electrics ran in Southend since that date, when U11DDs 30103 (YK75 LLC) and 30105 (YK75 LLF) both ran on route 25. Both are seen at Rayleigh Road, Eastwood. Note that there is a large, stylised f symbol at the front between decks on the nearside. Other double deck types in this livery also have this on the offside, but because of the advert frame there is no room on the U11DDs. Also, there is no room above the upper deck windows for the light purple relief stripe on these buses. Further, note the green lighting upstairs on 30103 and the blue on 30105, the colour can be changed by the driver. Red has also been seen.







A rear view of 30103, same route, same time, same place as on previous page. This and bottom two photos on previous page
John G Lidstone



Miscellaneous

A very unusual capture of two red and cream buses together, at Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea on 29 August 2025. Back when the Marine Estate was built in the late 1920s and early 1930s, services from Leigh Station were operated by red and cream Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services buses. First Essex Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 37985 (BJ11 XGY) in Westcliff heritage livery on route 21 leads Ensignbus B9TL / Wrightbus Gemini 364 (MX58 DXS) in Strawberry Streamliner livery on route 99 to Sutherland Boulevard. Unfortunately, the light was tricky due to an incoming thunderstorm.
John G Lidstone



Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 69369 (YJ08 XYH) having just arrived at Warley, Eagle Way on 3 September 2025 on one of the three extra round trips funded by 'Love Your Bus' grant funding, the 1135 from Chelmsford, introduced two days earlier. More details of these were in 'Service Revisions' in EBM 737.
Chris Stewart



Vehicle on Loan
RF68 FME, Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 516CDi / EVM, B16F, new to Arriva Kent & Surrey, AC007, in December 2018, from Parnell Coaches, Devon. Before being with Parnell it had been working on Arriva Click services in Watford. It remains in all silver Click livery with purple and blue vinyls removed. On loan to replace Sprinter 201 (AY17 UVM) which is withdrawn after suffering RTC damage (AY17 UVM was illustrated in EBMs 702, 726 and 737). Incidentally, Central Connect owns similar RF68 FLV/MC/A (210-1/3) and Vectare previously owned RF68 FLN (212).



Right: RF68 FME in Braintree Bus Interchange on 8 October 2025. **John Podgorski**

Withdrawn Vehicles
Transbus Dart / Caetano training bus LK03 NLG (formerly with First London and Metroline) has been sold for private preservation to a buyer in the London area. This bus was illustrated on the rear cover of EBM 707.

Enviro 200 442 (YX10 FEH) has been withdrawn from service.

Other Vehicle News
Arriva Midlands Scania N230UB / Scania OmniCity (single deck) 3559 (YR58 SSK) has been acquired for component recovery.

Enviro 200 MMC 371 (YW25 FNH) has received a super rear advert for Barrons accountants of Leigh. This has covered up the attractive (and effective) rear-end branding for Leigh Link.

Enviro 400 610 (CX14 EMS) has been an unusual Stephensons double-decker on NIBS Brentwood routes, seen on 21 on 29 September & 1 October and on 81 on 7 October.

Enviro 400 MMCs 804 and 805 (EU74 KTT/V) moved to Haverhill on 1 October 2025 with similar 801 and 802 (EU24 LWT/V) being transferred to Rochford in exchange. 801 is seen **below** on route 17 in Leigh-on-Sea Broadway on 10 October. **Andrew Sugden**

With thanks to the companies.



Part of Transport Made Simple, includes Simonds (where relevant) and Flagfinders

Konectbus and Konectbuses Integration
Following the announcement, reported in last month's EBM, of these two operating companies being acquired by Transport Made Simple from Go Ahead East Anglia, TMS have announced that in the coming months they intend to combine their existing network with the former Go Ahead East Anglia's network. Utilising the talent, facilities and vehicles they will gain from Go Ahead East Anglia, they believe that a joined up operation will be able to deliver a more reliable, sustainable and well-integrated service than either company could have delivered alone.

The company says its new network will be developed in two phases. The first, in January 2026, will see services across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex restructured and resources consolidated to improve reliability and address what it describes as "struggling standards of delivery" faced by Konectbus/es passengers in recent months. A second review is scheduled ahead of Easter 2026 following public and other stakeholder consultation.

As well as service integration, it has also signalled plans to invest in modernising its newly acquired fleets and will bid for additional Local Government funding, including through Essex County Council's 'Love Your Bus' scheme.

We will wait to see how things develop before deciding how to report the companies in EBM. For the time being we will keep the existing two separate articles.

New Operating Centre
An additional operating centre has been established at North Weald Airfield, Merlin Way, North Weald, Epping, Essex CM16 6HR. This base is home to routes 13/A/C, 16 and 18/A/C.

New Vehicles
Correction and Additions
In EBM 736 we reported on new Mercedes-Benz 517CDi Sprinter / EVM Citylines 235 (RX25 SYZ) and 236 (RX25 TBV), B16F, delivered in April 2025. These fleet number and registration number combinations were also reported on Bus Lists on the Web and Bustimes. However, it now transpires that there was a third such vehicle delivered around the same time, registration RX25 TBY, and that the above fleet / registration number combinations were incorrect. The correct fleet number / registration numbers are 235 (RX25 TBV), 236 (RX25 TBY) and 237 (RX25 SYZ). 235 and 236 are in white with dark blue rear, but no light blue dividing stripe. 237 was delivered in all white, but it now has an unusual red rear and branding for route H1 as illustrated in the photos on the inside front cover and the following page. Another such vehicle, first seen at the end of September 2025 in Ipswich, is 238 (RX25 SYY), in white with dark blue rear, again no light blue dividing stripe.

In EBM 733 we reported that new Mercedes-Benz 517CDi Sprinter / EVM Citylines 229, 230, 232, 233 (RX25 TFV/U/O/N) were at Simonds, mainly for newly won contracts on Norwich Park & Ride services PR2 (Harford - City Centre) and PR3 (Postwick - City Centre) in Park & Ride livery. We noted that full size buses also appear on these routes and it seems that the minibuses have proven to be too small. 229 transferred to Central Connect at the beginning of September to work on Essex & Hertfordshire routes, although on 2 October it moved to the Peterborough area. 230 also moved to Central Connect for use on Essex and Hertfordshire routes at the same time, although at the time of going to print it was no longer showing on Bustimes so its whereabouts were unknown. 232 and 233 remained at Simonds but are being used on normal routes. There are photos of 229 on the inside front cover and page 25.

Repaints
Former Arriva London Enviro 400s 586 (LJ59 LYC), c August 2025, 585 (LJ59 LYA), by early September, and 588 (LJ59 LYX), by 12 October, have been repainted from red into fleet livery. The first two at least were repainted at Flagfinders and have Flagfinders fleet names, 588 not yet seen.

Further to 344 (JW16 BUS) reported in EBM 737, another ex Whitelaws Enviro 200 MMC, 343 (GW16 BUS), which had been in silver livery with red front bumpers (although by February 2025 the bumpers had been repainted light blue), has been repainted into fleet livery (September 2025). This was followed by 345 (WH66 BUS), which had been all

silver, by early October (this bus had been out of service since January with a blown engine). These repaints were done at Simonds. All four ex-Whitelaws Enviro 200 MMCs, 343-346 (GW16/JW16/WH66/SW16 BUS) are now in fleet livery (346 was repainted after acquisition in October 2023 and was the first bus in new Central Connect livery). The four have full width rear destination displays, as shown in the photo below.

Enviro 200 925 (ML62 OGY) has been repainted from old Central Connect red and blue livery to two-tone blue fleet livery. It has Central Connect fleet names. Similar 922 (YX12 FPY) was due to follow. Both these vehicles are based at Simonds.

Other Vehicle News

Correction to EBM 722 (June 2024). It was reported that StreetLite 911, ex 1202 (CC11 BUS), which had been out of service for a few months, had left the fleet. Whilst it's true it left the Central Connect fleet, this was seen, out of use, at Simonds, Diss in September 2025. Sister 910, ex 1201 (CC10 BUS), which has been out of service since at least February 2024, is also there.

Services

When schools returned on 3 September 2025, double-deckers were transferred from route 25 (where they weren't really needed) to route 333 (single-deckers are still used on overnight journeys). However, as reported in 'Service Revisions' above, due to slower boarding times with the double-deckers, the route will revert to single-deckers from 5 January 2026.

With thanks to Adam James Hemingway, Allan White, Owen Woodliffe, LOTS and routeOne magazine.

Central Connect Rear Views



Right: 237 at Hoddesdon Clock Tower on route HL1 on 4 October 2025. **Allan White**

Below: 346 showing its impressive full width destination display on route 36A at Bishop's Stortford Interchange on 30 June 2025. **John Podgorski**



Right: Central Connect driver transfer car, Citroen 104 (YJ13 SYX), at Warley Eagle Way for new route 60 on 3 September 2025.
Chris Stewart
Below: Mercedes-Benz Sprinter / EVM Cityline 229 (RX25 TFV), with Norwich Park and Ride branding, on route 323 in Great Dunmow on 1 September 2025.
Owen Woodliffe. 229 was illustrated on route PR3 in Norwich in EBM 733.
Bottom: The lack of rear windows on similar 197 (RX71 SYW), seen at Bishop's Stortford Interchange on 14 August 2025, betrays even more the van origins of these vehicles.
John Podgorski









Acquired Vehicle

853 YP09 HWH Scania N270UD / Scania OmniCity H45/31F Ex Metrobus 6976

Last used by Metrobus 10 September 2025. Acquired shortly before the sale by Go-Ahead to Transport Made Simple. It entered service with Konectbuses on 2 October on college contract TL1. It is seen **above** in Colchester Bus Station the next day on route 63 **John Podgorski**. In Metrobus livery, so, together with Central Connect and Konectbus/es a third combination, in different shades, of two-tone blue livery!

Withdrawn Vehicle

587 PL51 LDU Volvo B7TL / Transbus President Withdrawn at CN on 1 October upon MOT expiry

Significant Allocations

646	LX09 FCD	CN - Konectbus	by 30 August
853	YP09 HWH	Metrobus - CN	transferred before 1 October

Fleet News

853 had been new to Brighton & Hove, fleet number 721, in 2009, but later transferred to Metrobus as their 6976. It was the last internal Go Ahead transfer to Konectbuses before the sale to Transport Made Simple.
Incidentally, Northcord have recently released a model of a similar bus, Metrobus 6958 (YP09 HWD), which is in the same livery but has branding for route 400 (Caterham to East Grinstead).

Enviro 200s 272 (YX61 DVP) and 273 (YX61 DVR) have been delivered to Dereham in Hedingham & Chambers livery with the modified emergency exit door, as reported last month. They regularly work Norwich city service 5, Norwich to Rackheath. These two buses are the last two deliveries in the red / white / maroon livery, being delayed due to their certification issues. They have a blue Konectbus fleet name on their front dash panels. (Sisters 270/1 (YX61

BXL/M) were delivered in the new Konectbuses livery.) The emergency door addition is quite a change as the whole window is removed and panelled around the door above the waist rail.

The withdrawal of 587 (PL51 LDU) marks the end of Plaxton President bodies in the service fleet.

Scania OmniLink 467 (YN58 BCK) has received a red front dash with white Konectbuses fleet name on with no mention of Go Ahead, whereas similar 466 (YN58 BCE) retains a cream dash and still has the remnants of large Go Ahead logos visible on the sides. Photos of both of these are on the rear cover.

Service News

Flagfinders schools service 826 (Castle Hedingham - Colchester) is accepting Konectbuses tickets and provides extra school and college time capacity over part of the 88 route. This is the first sign of new TMS group integration. The 88 is under review and changes will be made in January 2026 to improve capacity on some services. The changes will include route 826 being withdrawn at the end of Autumn Term (see 'Service Revisions' above).

There have been complaints in the press locally regards reduction in services from Great Yeldham. Additional school day journeys are to be introduced on route 89 (Halstead, Conies Road - Great Yeldham) from 3 November (again see 'Service Revisions' above).

Additional Comments

Konectbuses depots are slowly having reference to Go Ahead removed, as are the vehicles, although Hedingham and Sudbury depots appear slower to remove the old fleet names. The website still links to the Go Ahead style webpages and information pages but latest information is being issued in a hybrid style TMS format.

With thanks to Dave Arnold, John Podgorski, Robert Appleton and the Konectbuses website.

Below: Further to the photos on pages 24 & 25 another rear shot of a (now) TMS Group minibus! Mercedes-Benz Sprinter EVM Cityline 100 (NK69 FAA) on service 40 in Witham on 18 August 2025. **John Podgorski**



Ipswich Buses introduced revised timetables from 31 August 2025, mainly enhanced Ipswich town services, partly funded by Suffolk County Council's BSIP allocation. Service 92, Ipswich - Manningtree, gained an extra journey at 0649NS / 0716S Brantham Bull - Manningtree, useful for anyone wanting to catch early trains at Manningtree Railway Station. The bus then continues on its normal duties starting at 0709NS / 0735S Manningtree - Ipswich 92. There were no other changes to 92 nor Ipswich - Colchester 93/A, nor school service 693, Dedham Lamb Corner - East Bergholt High School.

The three Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekkas, 60/61/62 (PJ54 YZT/U/V), are still the normal buses allocated to the three all day duties on 92/93/A. The 1645 Ipswich - Colchester 93 & 1810 return is now worked by a Scania OmniCity off a Holbrook Academy school service instead of an ADL Enviro 200. The 1740 Ipswich - Manningtree 92 & 1830 return is now worked by an ADL Enviro 200 off Framlingham - Ipswich 118/119 instead of a Scania OmniCity.

On 29 September, 63 (YN06 TFZ), the Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekka that was new to Network Colchester in 2006, was noted on school service 693 instead of a Scania OmniCity, and since then 63 has been the regular performer on 693.

There were major changes to the Ipswich School contracts from the start of the new term on 4 September 2025. In the previous term, there had been twelve routes, ten worked by Ipswich Buses, two worked by Charlise of Ipswich. These routes were managed by Kura for Ipswich School, but for the new school year 2025/26 Kura has been replaced by Studentsafe. The routes were revised with changes to operators. Buses and coaches fitted with seat belts are still required.

There are now ten routes, operated by St Edmunds Travel of Bury St Edmunds two routes, Charlise of Ipswich five routes, REL Tendring of Thorpe-le-Soken one route and Ipswich Buses two routes. Charlise used to operate minicoaches, but they have now expanded with the purchase of larger coaches. There are still five routes operating from Essex, due to arrive at Ivry Street in Ipswich next to Ipswich School between 0822 and 0830. The return journeys still depart from Ivry Street at 1625. Route numbers are no longer used. The five routes are:

0710 Castle Hedingham - Halstead - Earls Colne - Eight Ash Green - Ivry Street.
0700 Clacton - Weeley - Great Bromley - Dedham Heath - Dedham - Ivry Street.
0655 Feering - Colchester Tollgate - Braiswick - Boxted - Langham - Ivry Street.
0700 Langenhoe - Colchester - Ipswich Road - Washbrook - Ivry Street.
0700 Frinton-on-Sea - Thorpe-le-Soken - Tendring - Bradfield - Mistley - Lawford - Brantham - Holbrook - Ivry Street.

On 10 September, the 1625 departures from Ivry Street were worked by:

Destination	Operator	Vehicle
Castle Hedingham	Charlise	BU75 WSX, Volvo B8R MCV Evotor C53FLt
Clacton	Charlise	YH25 FCV, Yutong TC9 C37F
Feering	REL Tendring	PO61 BGZ, Iveco 150E25 Vehixel C67F
Langenhoe	Ipswich Buses	YY73 TGZ, ADL E40D / Enviro 400 MMC H48/32F
Frinton-on-Sea	Ipswich Buses	51 (SGZ 3351), Scania OmniCity N230UD H47/30F

YY73 TGZ is an ADL demonstrator, first spotted on the Langenhoe route on 5 September. A photo of this bus is on the opposite page. It continued working on the Langenhoe route until 12 September when it returned to ADL. It was replaced by Scania OmniCity 49 (SGZ 3349) for the 1625 journey to Langenhoe on 12 September. Then Scania OmniCity 47 (SGZ 3347) was used on 15, 16 and 17 September.

Ipswich Buses have taken delivery of four new ADL E40D / Enviro 400 MMCs, 15, 16, 17, 18 (SN75 YVU/V/W/X) from ADL stock, 11.5m long, H51/34F, fitted with seat belts. On 18 September, 15 (SN75 YVU) worked both journeys on the Langenhoe route. 15 remained the usual allocation to this route until 6 October, when it moved onto Ipswich town routes. Then Scania OmniCity 47 (SGZ 3347) returned to the Langenhoe route, and has remained the normal

allocation. [As an aside, three ADL E40D / Enviro 400 MMCs were acquired in 2024, 5, 6, 7 (SN65 OHZ/OJA/B), these are former Mistral leased buses, 10.9m long, H47/32F, without seat belts, so cannot be used on school routes into Essex.]



With Ipswich Buses having an increased PVR on its town services due to the 31 August changes, the seat belt fitted buses that used to work Ipswich School contracts are now busy on other work. These are Scania OmniCities 46/48/49 (SGZ 3346/48/49), ADL Enviro 200 74 (DU60 LOJ) & 75 (GD10 MVM), ADL Enviro 200 MMC 66/68/70 (YW68 PFA/E/G) and 73 (YX18 KNW). Additionally, Enviro 200 76 (LX58 LML) used to be regularly allocated to Ipswich School route 3 from & to Dedham Heath, but this vehicle is currently out of service.

With thanks to Ipswich Transport Society journals, Ipswich Buses Enthusiast Facebook Group, Ipswich School website, Charlise Ltd Facebook page, Bus Lists on the Web and Bustimes.

Above Right: Ipswich Buses Scania OmniCity 51 (SGZ 3351) leaving Frinton-on-Sea, returning to Ipswich on 9 September 2025, after working the Ipswich School contract route from Ivry Street to Frinton-on-Sea. 51 has remained the regular bus allocated to this route.
Below: YY73 TGZ, the ADL E40D / Enviro 400 MMC demonstrator, running light into East Bergholt on 11 September 2025. It worked 1545 East Bergholt High School - Ipswich, Robin Drive 695, then light to Ivry Street in Ipswich to work 1625 Ipswich School contract to Langenhoe. YY73 TGZ was given temporary fleet number 500 during its stay with Ipswich Buses. Both **Robert Appleton**



Other Operators

Roger A Smith

Acme Bus, Saffron Walden
Scania N230UD / Scania OmniCity LX09 AFZ is here from Stagecoach East London. Current capacity not known but was H41/22D when acquired.

Anita, Stansted Airport
Recently acquired is BV66 WPA, a Caetano C80FL bodied Scania K410EB6, previously with Skills, Nottingham.
This vehicle has been re-registered as AC66 ERN.

Kirby's Coaches, Rayleigh
K90 BYS (ex BJ59 OJD), a Mercedes Benz Tourismo (C49FT) has gone from here.

REL
REL Capital, owners of REL Davian and REL Tendring, is ending its involvement with the coach industry. It appears that REL Capital's chairman, Andy Scott, is relocating to the USA and intends to dispose of most of the UK interests of the company.

Roman Coaches, Colchester
YK75 LFR and YK75 LFS, a pair of Yutong T122HDHs (C53FLT), are brand new here. V21 ROM, an Irizar i6, has reverted to its original registration of YN67 VDD, and V123 ROM, a Yutong ZK6129HQ, has reverted to YL17 BFP and has gone from here.

Tey Tours, Great Tey
Caetano bodied Mercedes-Benz OC500RF FJ10 EZK (C51FLT) is here from Ellis and Dickson, Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland.

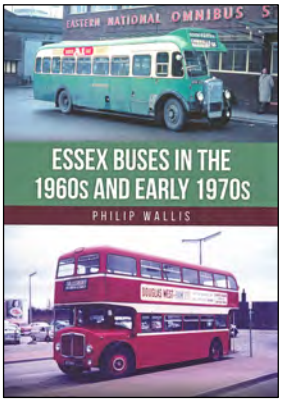
With thanks to the PSV Circle.

Below: SBC Enviro 400 MMC SK22 BTE on Rail Replacement at Leigh-on-Sea Station on Sunday 21 September 2025, running to and from Laindon. **Richard Lewis**



Book Review

Richard Delahoy



'Essex Buses in the 1960s and Early 1970s' by Philip Wallis
96 pages, A5, softback; Amberley Publishing, £15.99

There seems to be no end to the titles that Amberley are turning out on a very wide range of bus and coach topics, but this is one that will resonate with many EBEG members. As Philip explains in the introduction, he "conceived the idea of putting a book together to illustrate the great variety of operators providing bus services in Essex before the National Bus Company's corporate image and standardised liveries started to become all-persuasive across the county - indeed country - from 1972 onwards". He has certainly succeeded in that aim. Rather than being tempted to only use his own photos, Philip has gone out of his way to illustrate virtually every operator of bus services in the county - 32 are featured in all, with pictures from no less than 26 different photographers. The Group assisted in sourcing some of the more obscure examples.

The book is divided into a number of themes, initially the larger operators (including Eastern Counties incursions into Essex), Moores of Kelvedon before and after takeover by Eastern National, then most other north and mid-Essex bus operators, Southend & District Joint Services and finally Essex bordering London. This ensures a good variety in reading the book, rather than, for example, concentrating all the Eastern National pictures into one chapter. There are brief historical introductions to the various sections.

In all there are around 180 photos, 45 in colour, presented two or three to a page and with informative captions. My only slight disappointment is that this means some pictures are rather smaller than is ideal, but I recognise that the Amberley 96-page format is a constraint, set against the desire to include as many fascinating pictures as possible. Whether your tastes are for the big operators such as EN, Colchester and Southend, or for the more obscure, down to Commer minibus 9859 PU on the service to the Breach Barns mobile home site, there is plenty to enjoy in this book. Choosing just one picture to illustrate this review is very difficult, but I was particularly taken by Philip's shot of a pair of EN Lodekkas leaving Chelmsford Bus Station, with LD 1456 (884 CEV) on the 32 leading FLF 1657 (993 KOO) on the 31, the former nicely blinded up for its trip to Ongar, with two-line intermediate display.

Highly recommended. Available from Amberley and other outlets such as MDS Book Sales. The Group also has a small stock available at meetings.



Bristol SC 427 Fleet Number and Depot Plates



Chris Stewart's restored preserved former Eastern National Bristol SC 427 (604 JPU) was the cover star of EBM 715 two years ago this month, in a photo taken at Lodge Coaches Car & Bus Day on 20 August 2023. Its story and more photos were inside. However, for an Eastern National vehicle it didn't look fully dressed. It was missing depot and fleet number plates. These have now been fitted as seen **above** in **Chris**'s photo taken at Braintree Railway Station on the way to the Sudbury Bus Rally on 31 August 2025.



Chris explains: "My friend Chris Baggs, who I've known since schooldays, is a fellow enthusiast and a director of a firm which makes metal casings, and offered to make the plates for 427 using the laser cutting equipment in his factory and a drawing supplied by me. The surround and numbers were cut out and then re-fixed with epoxy resin. Painting them was my job. The BD depot plate was already in my collection and the CN one on the rear came from KSW 2383 in exchange for an SD one. 427 was at Brentwood for some - probably all - of its first five years and finished up at Clacton".



As an aside, when the Eastern National fleet was renumbered in August 1964, four months after 427 had been sold to Vagg, Knockin Heath, depot and fleet number plates were painted dark red. What perhaps is less well known is that some of the numerals were not quite the same shape, particularly the 2, which can be seen by comparing the plates on 427 to those on Bristol LD / ECW 2422 (214 BPU), courtesy of **Richard Delahoy**.





Above: Another photo of 427 at the Sudbury Bus Rally on 31 August 2025, this time taken at the Colne Valley Railway. Alongside is Pat Burnside's preserved Eastern Counties LC 556 (3003 AH). **Paul Sparks**

Rear Cover Photos

The acquisition of Scania CK230B / Scania OmniLinks 465-467 (YN58 BCE/F/K) by Hedingham & Chambers from the Go Ahead London commercial fleet was reported in EBM 717 (January 2024). They remained in previous operator Brighton & Hove livery.

Top: 466 was illustrated in EBM 717. It had gold 'Go Ahead' fleet names on front and sides. The front one was later replaced by a large white 'hedingham' one above the grille, this has now been removed and a small 'konectbuses' one directly below the windscreen has been added, as seen in this photo taken in Stephenson Road West, Clacton, running not in service from Clacton depot, probably to take up a school service. However, despite the recent change of ownership it still retains its side 'Go Ahead' fleet names.

Bottom: In contrast, 467 had all its 'Go Ahead' fleet names removed soon after acquisition and gained a 'hedingham & chambers' (on two lines) white fleet name on the front only, above the grille. It retained this until at least August this year, but now this front panel has been repainted from cream to red (with silver above & below) with a white 'konectbuses' fleet name added, as seen in this photo taken in Pier Avenue, Clacton, after arrival on route 7 from Walton-on-the-Naze. White on red definitely stands out better than white on cream!

Both 10 October 2025.

Both **Robert Appleton**





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Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964