

Essex Bus News

Issue 679 November 2020



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



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Essex Bus News the monthly magazine of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

Issue 679 November 2020



Above

In October 2020 First Essex acquired two Volvo B7TL / Transbus ALX400 from First West of England which had been new to First London, 32249 & 32260. Both have entered service still with Bristol fleet names, as illustrated by 32249 on route 25 at Southend Travel Centre on 4 November. More details, plus a photo of 32260, on page 10. Behind 32249 is Gardner Travel liveried Scania / Irizar coach YN55 PXD, being operated by Vectare as a schools' duplicate on Arriva Southend service 6. More information on these coach duplicates is on page 14. **Richard Delahoy**

Front cover

This issue has an Eastern National theme running through it (details on page 4) and what better way to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of Eastern National than with a photo of First Essex's latest heritage livery, 33424 in National Bus Company green. It re-entered service in this livery on 10 November on route 625. **Richard Delahoy** was able to arrange his daily lockdown walk the next day to coincide with 33424's first journey in public service (as opposed to on the restricted students' route 625), on route 25 at Southend Travel Centre. We had been planning to update the cover design of EBN in the New Year, starting with the January issue. However, the new design is based on Eastern National colours to reflect the heritage of the Group, and so with an EN theme to this issue and an EN livery on the front, it was decided to bring this forward by two months. The new design is also based on that used for the books 'Fleet Records Volumes 1-3' and 'Eastern National and Thamesway in London' to give a 'house-style' for Group publications.

Inside front cover top

Chris Stewart's story of the Eastern National open-top Bristol KSW that went to Wales is on pages 24-27. WNO 484 is pictured in Cardiff in the Queen's Silver Jubilee livery in June 1977.

Tony Wilson

Inside front cover bottom

The colours of autumn. On 17 October 2020, rail replacement services were running from Colchester North Station and so buses on layover on routes 62/B were parking just around the corner in Bruff Close, where 37042 is seen, photographed by its driver.

Ryan Hannah

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Missing or Defective EBNs

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

Subscriptions

A calendar year subscription is £22. New members may join from any month, but subscriptions will always run to December from whichever month the member chooses. Those joining from February to December inclusive will pay a pro-rata subscription calculated at £2 per month. For example, a member joining in March would pay £10 x £2, i.e. £20. Please contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shobury Road, Southend-on-Sea SS1 3TT
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Membership Records & Data Protection

A statement of our compliance with 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.

Printed by

Directcds Ltd, Unit 2, Gentlemans Field, Westmill Road, Ware,
Hertfordshire SG12 0EF, 01920 465023
www.directcds.co.uk

Target Dates for EBN 680

Reports to Sub-Editors	29 November
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	4 December
Dispatch by Printers	on or before 14 December

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 4th and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the next month. **Note the shorter than usual period between issues.**

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

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Group Notices

Welcome to New Members

Clive Romain, Great Dunmow - 1167

Jeff Moon, Canvey Island - 1168

Ian Twine, Upminster - 1169

Membership Renewals

Many thanks to the more than two-thirds of the membership who have renewed their subscriptions for 2021 already. Indeed, we hit the one hundred mark only one week after the October issue was delivered. Very many thanks also to those who included an extra donation with their sub, that is really appreciated (and apologies that I have not had time to thank each of you individually)! There was a renewal slip loose with last month's magazine and it's not too late to respond if you've not done so already. To ensure there is no delay in continuing your supply of Essex Bus News for 2021, we would appreciate your renewal by 1 December. Subscriptions have been frozen at £22 and can be paid in one of three ways - direct bank transfer (by electronic banking or on your bank app), by PayPal or by cheque. If you don't have the renewal slip to hand and need further details, please e-mail or write to me for the information - my contact details are on page 2.

If for any reason you do not plan to renew, could you please let me know - including your reason if possible, it helps us to understand why people leave us, to help improve our service - again using the details on page 2.

Richard Delahoy, Treasurer & Membership Secretary

Recent Publications with an Essex interest by Owen Woodliffe

Essex and Suffolk Independent Bus Operators - An Early 1960s selection. A4, 84 pages black & white. This is the third book in the series reviewed on page 13 of EBN 677. £18 (inc. p&p) from J R Young, 67 Boston Avenue, Southend on Sea SS2 6JH, drjryoung@aol.com (direct from author only; a reminder, please use this E Mail address and not the one listed in EBN 677).

Colour Scene Snapshot 4: East Anglian Buses 1975-84. Nigel Eadon-Clarke £17 (inc. p&p), from MDS Book Sales, 128 Pikes Lane, Glossop SK13 8EH, www.mdsbooks.co.uk.

Two further books of interest are featured on pages 4 & 5.

Below: Bristol VR / ECW 3048 in ENOC Golden Jubilee livery in Crawley on 13 July 1980, more details on next page. **Richard Delahoy**



Eastern National 90th Anniversary

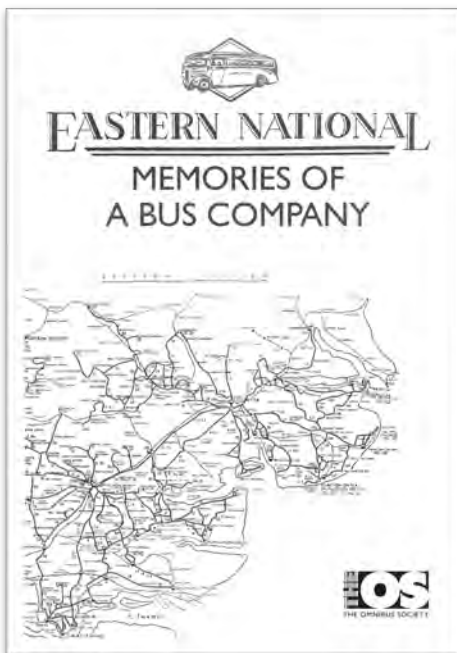
This year marks the 90th anniversary of the start of Eastern National, the predecessor of today's First Essex business. Unfortunately, Covid restrictions mean that it hasn't been possible to hold any events to celebrate. But First Essex have contributed massively to the occasion with no less than five vehicles repainted into heritage liveries since October last year, 37007 (mid 1990s Eastern National), 37985 (Westcliff-on-Sea), 37986 (1968 FLF coach livery), 69520 (mid 1990s Thamesway) and most recently the cover star 33424 (NBC livery), joining 33191 which has been in Westcliff-on-Sea heritage livery since 2014. This issue has an Eastern National theme running through it, in book adverts / reviews, articles, letters and colour photos. On the previous page is a heritage livery photo from 40 Years ago when Eastern National were celebrating their 50th anniversary. Seen in Crawley on 13 July 1980 taking part in a rally / road run from Golders Green to mark another 50th anniversary, that of Green Line coaches, Bristol VR / ECW 3048 shows off its EN Golden Jubilee livery which had been unveiled at an open day at Central Works the previous weekend. The blind display recalls the Chelmsford to Brentwood service established by EN's predecessor, the National Omnibus & Transport Company in 1921, which later became the 30 and still runs today, between Chelmsford and Brentwood, as the 351. Incidentally, when this vehicle was in heritage livery, the heritage livery featured on this issue's front cover was the standard Eastern National livery! **Richard Delahoy**

New Book Celebrating 90 Years of Eastern National

To commemorate Eastern National starting operations in April 1930 as successor to the National Omnibus & Transport Company (and the National Steam Car Company prior to that) the Omnibus Society has just published a celebratory book 'Eastern National Memories of a Bus Company', cover shown above right. The book records memories of staff who worked for EN, particularly in the 1960s to 1980s, and includes a number of fascinating stories recalling life at the sharp end of bus operations. Quite a few of the contributors' names will be familiar to Essex Bus News readers. The book is A5 size, paperback with 168 pages including 38 illustrations (10 in colour); ISBN 978 1 909091 27 6. Retail price is £12.00, p&p free to OS Members, £3 to non-members, and would make an ideal Christmas present! Just tell Santa to write to: Ian Barlex at 3 Caledonian Close, Ilford, IG3 9QF with a cheque for £15 payable to The Omnibus Society, Eastern & Southern Branch. We will have a full review of the book in our next issue.

Traffic Posters

The Group has got in its collection a number of 'Traffic Posters', not all Eastern National, which we will include in EBN as 'space fillers' as and when required. To start these off, below is one from 1953, advertising new Time Table (two words in those days) booklets.



EASTERN NATIONAL

WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA

NEW TIME TABLE BOOKLETS

COMMENCING

SUNDAY, 4th JANUARY, 1953

**CONTAINING DETAILS OF ALL "EASTERN NATIONAL" AND
"WESTCLIFF" SERVICES, INCLUDING THOSE OF HICKS BROS., LTD.,
AND THOSE PREVIOUSLY OPERATED BY THE CITY COACH CO., LTD.**

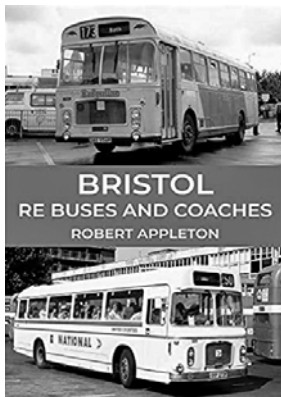
BOOKLETS OBTAINABLE (PRICE 1/-) AT LOCAL OFFICES.

EN AG 6172/11252.

Head Offices : New Writtle Street, Chelmsford. 'Phone 3431 (4 lines).

(Excludes South 17/1/54)

Book Review: Bristol RE Buses and Coaches



This book, written by Group member Robert Appleton, has recently been published by Amberley Publishing. It is available from the normal distributors, including the publishers themselves, MDS and Amazon. On Amazon it is also available as a Kindle e-book.

For Bristol Commercial Vehicles, RE meant Rear Engine, but for the author, who had many long journeys on Bristol REs with no failures or breakdowns, RE also meant Reliable Engineering. So, this book is a tribute to the Bristol RE.

172 of the 180 images in this book cover Bristol RE Buses and Coaches in service in the period 1970 to 1994. Essex and East Anglia are well represented. NBC operators featured include Eastern Counties, Cambus, Eastern National, United Counties, Lincolnshire, Trent, Crosville and Bristol Omnibus Company. Municipal operators include Colchester, Ipswich, Halton, Warrington, and Rossendale. A number of independents are included, especially after bus deregulation in 1986.

The peak years for Bristol RE production were 1968 to 1974, so by 1990 only a few operators in England were operating Bristol REs in any quantity. These operators featured include Pennine Blue, Busways South Shields, Badgerline and Northern Bus.

The majority of Bristol REs illustrated have bus, dual-purpose, or coach bodies by Eastern Coach Works, but other body builders included are Plaxton, East Lincs, Alexander and Marshall.

While researching this book, the Author was impressed by the number of Bristol REs in preservation, so the last eight images in this book show restored Bristol REs, as a tribute to the expense and hard work involved in restoring Bristol REs for current and future generations to enjoy. Appropriately, the very last photo of all is of fellow Group member David Edwards's superbly restored Eastern National 1516.

Excellent photos with detailed and informative captions, this book is highly recommended to all members.



To illustrate the quality of the photos in Robert's book, this superb photo didn't make the cut. Clacton's 1526, on loan to Harwich, on route 103 in Heath Road, Mistley in April 1973. **Robert Appleton**

679 for EBN 679



First Essex 43679 (R679 MEW) at St Osyth's beach on summer service 19 on 27 August 2013. **Adam Kelleher**



Above: Eastern National Leyland National 1722 (NEV 679M) at Duke Street garage, Chelmsford on 27 August 1988. **Robert Downton**

Service Revisions

by Paul Harvey

with thanks to LOTS, Essex, Hertfordshire & Suffolk County Councils, Omnibus Society (Eastern), Richard Delahoy & Peter Mansbridge

This month's report again has two sections, the usual bus changes and a report of the current service situation re the virus arrangements.

Standard Changes

2 September 2020

FWC001 Heybridge to Sandon School (Sch) **Fourways Coaches**
FW001R Danbury to Sandon School (Sch) **Fourways Coaches**
FWC002 Little Baddow to Sandon School (Sch) **Fourways Coaches**
FWC003 Hatfield Peverel to Sandon School (Sch) **Fourways Coaches**
FWC005 Chelmer Village to Sandon School (Sch) **Fourways Coaches**
FWC006 Rettendon to Sandon School (Sch) **Fourways Coaches**
FWC007 South Woodham Ferrers to Sandon School (Sch) **Fourways Coaches**
All the above: revised school timetable
FWC009 Chelmer Village to Beaulieu Park School (Sch) **Fourways Coaches**
New school service.

7 September

HSB1 Old Harlow Churchgate Street to Harlow (MWF) **Epping Forest Community Transport**
Revised to operate from Toot Hill to Harlow on Mon, Wed & Fri providing two return journeys replacing Ugobus SB12.

14 September

503 Althorne to Southend Schools (Sch) **Stephensons**
Revision to school timetable with students transferring to service 504 at South Woodham Ferrers for onward travel.

28 September

473 Fyfield to Brentwood County High School (Sch) **NIBS**
Minor timetable revision to school timetable.
474 High Ongar to Brentwood County High School (Sch) **NIBS**
Minor timetable revision to school timetable.
910 Marks Tey to Coggeshall Honywood School (Sch) **Go Ahead Hedingham**
Afternoon journey to operate 10 minutes earlier.

12 October

902 Little Horkesley to Colchester Stanway School (Sch) **Go Ahead Hedingham**
Revised route with Aldham served before Wakes Colne. In the afternoon Station Road will be served before Spring Gardens Road.

5 November

431 Blackmore to Shenfield High School (Sch) **NIBS**
Revision to timetable.
434 High Ongar to Shenfield High School (Sch) **NIBS**
Revised route in Ongar and also to serve Shelley with revised timetable.
436 Shelley to Shenfield High School (Sch) **NIBS**
Section of route between Shelley & Kelvedon Hatch withdrawn. Service to operate via Hook End & Doddingtonhurst to revised timetable.

Covid-19 Updated Bus Operator Information

The County of Essex (excluding Southend & Thurrock unitary areas) was placed into Tier 2 Covid-19 measures from 17 October 2020, but no changes to bus service provision resulted from this. Then from 5 November, England was placed into a second lockdown. Because this was time limited to four weeks, because educational establishments remained open and because of the certainty of Government funding support for services to be maintained at current levels, the large reductions to services that occurred at the end of March following the introduction of the first lockdown were not repeated, with most bus service provision continuing with no change, therefore the mass delicensing and storage of vehicles seen in the spring has not occurred this time.

The temporary bus service variation process has been extended from 4 January 2021. The date by which services revert to the pre-pandemic timetables is now open ended, with a review being undertaken in March 2021. Bus operators will be given 84 days' notice of the reversion date, which means it will be no sooner than 24 May 2021.

From 4 January 2021 notification periods in England will change. Applications from bus operators for temporary variations will become subject to Local Authority notice of seven days with a 28-day statutory notification.

Operators will be able to vary services at shorter notice than the above timeframes as an emergency procedure, but this can only be done in certain scenarios relating to the pandemic. The Local Authority notification period is reduced to 72 hours, with the Traffic Commissioner to allow short notice dispensation and decide the terms of that notice period.

Airport Bus Express

It is understood the Stansted Airport to London A20/A21 Express Coach service had re-commenced, date not known, but as of 11 November 2020 all services have been suspended.

Arriva Kent Thameside

Further to EBN 678 where it was noted that service 6 (Southend to Temple Sutton) had an increase in the Mon to Fri frequency to every 20 mins from an unknown date, this date is now reported as 1 September 2020.

Ensignbus

6 September 2020 Z1 Tilbury Amazon to Aveley & Z4 Tilbury Amazon to Pitsea Broadway, minor timetable revisions.

From 8 September 22, 33, 44, 66, 73, 83 & 88 have additional school journeys introduced with the letter 'S' before the route number, only for school students until further notice.

5 October Z1 Tilbury Amazon to Aveley, Z2 Tilbury Amazon to Canning Town & Z4 Tilbury Amazon to Pitsea Broadway, certain journeys to operate Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday only.

18 October Z2 Tilbury Amazon to Canning Town, further minor revisions introduced.

Epping Forest Community Transport

7 September Chigwell local service CP01 resumed until 2 October then withdrawn. Chigwell local service CP02 never resumed.

First Essex

21 September 42 group additional school day journey S42A introduced from Great Dunmow to Chelmsford at 0734 for students only.

1 November service changes as follows:

25 (Basildon to Southend) extra journeys introduced Mon to Fri term time at 0638, 0746, 0855, 1454 & 1608 Basildon to Wickford & 0713, 0818, 0930, 1415, 1530 & 1650 Wickford to Basildon.

S31 Maldon to Chelmsford schools renumbered 31A. Extra school day journeys added as 31X from Althorne to Chelmsford departing at 0737.

42/A/B (Galleywood to Broomfield Hospital / Stansted Airport / Braintree) the 0711 school day 42B journey from Braintree to Chelmsford Wood Street renumbered S42B for students only, no longer serves Broomfield Hospital. The 1557 school day 42A from Chelmsford to Dunmow renumbered S42A for students only, no longer serving Broomfield Hospital. Sunday 42 2013 from Broomfield Hospital to Chelmsford Wood Street extended to Galleywood.

54 group (Beaulieu Park to North Melbourne / Broomfield Hospital) on Sundays 54 extended to Broomfield Hospital from North Melbourne via Woodhall Estate.

56 group (Beaulieu Park to North Melbourne / Broomfield Hospital) service 56B introduced on Sundays between Chelmsford & Broomfield Hospital. Current daytime 56 will operate via the 56C route serving North Avenue.

62 (Colchester to Brightlingsea) extra journey introduced Mon to Fri Term time 0733 Colchester to Brightlingsea & 1525 Brightlingsea to Colchester.

67 group (Colchester to West Mersea) afternoon 67C journey will operate 8 mins later at 1553 with revised route in Colchester omitting Town Centre stops.

70 (Chelmsford to Colchester via Braintree) extra school day service added at 1550 from Chelmsford to Braintree Marks Farm. School day service 70 1500 from Colchester to Chelmsford withdrawn.

71 group (Chelmsford to Colchester via Witham) school day 71X journeys at 0645 & 1335 Chelmsford to Colchester and 0800 Colchester to Chelmsford withdrawn. The 0805 service 71 from Colchester to Chelmsford will operate at 0800. Extra school day journey introduced 71B from Chelmer Village to Chelmsford departing at 0902.

X30 (Southend to Stansted Airport) additional journey added at 0930 Rayleigh to Chelmsford.

National Express

Coach service 482 London to Ipswich via Stansted Airport, Braintree & Colchester has been withdrawn from an unknown date. This service was only introduced from 31 July 2020. Service A6 London Victoria to Stansted is suspended until 3 December (until end of current national lockdown). Service A9 London Stratford to Stansted Airport currently operating every 2 hours until further notice.

Stagecoach East Cambridge

1 November 7 Cambridge to Saffron Walden increase in frequency within Cambridgeshire. Service to Saffron Walden remains hourly.

Stephensons

12 October services restored back to pre-Covid-19 timetables on 21 Braintree to Black Notley, 30 Braintree local Beckers Green to Marks Farm & 9/A Great Bardfield to Great Notley. All NIBS & Stephensons services are now operating to pre-Covid 19 levels.



Above: as far as is known, the S42A/B are the first time that a First Essex or predecessor company have operated a route where the route number has both a prefix and a suffix letter displayed on the vehicle. This would have been difficult (apart from 1-9) in the days of three track number blinds. Group founder Alan Osborne comments "In the days after Westcliff-on-Sea and Hicks passed to Eastern National, in the timetables their services were prefixed by a W or H. As an example, the ex-Westcliff service from Southend to Romford was referred to as W2A to distinguish it from Eastern National 2. Although W2A was shown in the index and on the timetable, it was never carried on the vehicles' blinds." Above: Park & Ride liveried 67196 is seen on the S42A on the third day of the route, 4 November 2020. **Adam Kelleher**. The poster on page 4 recalls the inclusion of Westcliff & Hicks services in the Eastern National timetable book. Below: 32642 is seen on the Mon-Fri one morning each way route 350 in Brentwood High Street, on the 0900 from the station back to Chelmsford on 13 October 2020. Details of the 350 were in Service Revisions in EBN 677. **Chris Stewart**



Acquired Vehicles

32249	LT52 WVM	YV3S2G5153A002453	2065/1	H45/21D	01/03	First London VFL1249
32260	LT52 WWF	YV3S2G5113A002496	2065/12	H45/21D	01/03	First London VFL1260



Volvo B7TL / Transbus ALX400. Acquired from First West of England. Collected from Hengrove depot, Bristol on 18 October. In Urban livery, both have main Bristol fleet names each side. Converted to single door and LED blinds fitted when they left London service. Previously in service with First South Yorkshire (at Doncaster) and First West Yorkshire (at York) before moving to Bristol last year. They are the first ALX 400 bodied Volvos in the fleet to have straight staircases. 32260, which still has a large Contactless advert on its upstairs front window from when it was at York, entered service on school route 825 on 19 October, then was mainly on the 25, as seen here at Wickford High Street on 22nd. **William Morrison.**

32249 entered service on route 25 on 26 October.

Vehicles on Loan

Correction to EBN 678, although 66970 & 66971 are ex Leicester and thus were part of the South Yorkshire & Midlands division, the depots that they were at before moving to Colchester, Bramley (Leeds) and Huddersfield, are part of First West Yorkshire.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 7 2020/21 (27 September - 24 October)

32260 FG-BN, 37015 CR-CR (oos), 37042 CR (oos)-CR, 37135 CR (oos)-CR, 42898 FG-CF, 66759 FG (on loan)-CR, 66760 FG (on loan)-BN, 66872 FG (on loan)-CF-BN-CR, 66873 FG (on loan)-CF, 67166 CF-BN, 69910 BN (oos)-BN, 69911 BN (oos)-BN, 69912 BN (oos)-BN, 69913 BN (oos)-BN, 66872 was in service at Chelmsford on 5 & 7 October, in service at Basildon on 9th, 10th, 14th, 15th & 16th and in service at Colchester on 17th-21st. It was back in service at Basildon most days from 22nd-30th, on loan for half-term, before returning to Colchester on 31st where it has remained since.

Disposals

37009, the Volvo B7TL that returned to Wrightbus after fire damage without being repaired, was towed away from Colchester depot by Alpha Recovery on 6 November 2020.

Further to EBNs 674 & 670, 62407 and 65690 were sold by Ensignbus to Mike Lawrenson, Preston in October 2020.

Further to EBNs 675 & 674, 33080, 42561 and 67638 were sold by Ensignbus to Shelton Motors, Ely for scrap in October 2020.

Heritage Livery

As illustrated on the front cover, 33424 has been repainted into National Bus Company heritage livery of leaf green with a white band. It has been fitted with all-round white LED destination and number blinds. It re-entered service on school route 625 (Chelmsford - Southend Schools) on the afternoon of 10 November. As with other heritage repaints, this was done at Mardens, Benfleet. Thanks are due to all involved in the project to bring another historic livery back to the streets of Essex.

Driver Training Livery

Further to EBN 678, 66863 has returned from being fully converted into a driver trainer and being repainted into red driver training livery. It was seen back at Chelmsford depot on 19 October. 66846 is currently away for driver training conversion and repaint into red.

Updated Livery

69429, seen on 42 group of routes on 28 October, to new Urban 2 livery. By being repainted, it has finally lost its East of England Co-Op Funeral Service super rear ad which it has had since being acquired from First Eastern Counties in October 2014. Further to EBN 678, 69434 re-entered service after its repaint into Urban 2 livery on the 42 group on 15 October.

Capacity Changes

Right: on loan from First West Yorkshire, 66759 at Harwich on route 103 on 15 October shows its sticker for a 22 passenger capacity. This contrast with native B7RLEs which, despite having the same seating capacity of 43 and layout, are labelled for a maximum of 21 passengers. Note also the 'York' depot sticker but the 'First Essex' legal lettering.

David Edwards

Vehicles Returning to Service

As reported in EBN 678, 32068 and 33424 were the only two vehicles that were taken out of service around the time of the 29 March service reductions that had yet to re-enter service or be sold. These have now returned to service, 32068 details below and 33424 details above.

Super Rear Adverts

Further to EBNs 677 & 678, HH47529 has received the same super rear ad for Essex & Suffolk Water as CF44537. When last seen, unlike 44537, the advert still covered the rear window. A correction to EBN 678, 44537 was incorrectly written as 44437.



Area News and Workings

Colchester

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CR except where stated. All dates October 2020 except where stated.)

32068 finally returned to service on 7 November, on route 88.

Further to EBN 678, as at 30 October: 32087 was at Chelmsford depot after having an engine rebuild, awaiting completion and collection, it returned to use at Colchester on driver shuttles on 13 November; 37015 was still out of service at Colchester with engine / fuel filter defects; 41521 was out of use with engine defects and awaiting parts, but was back in use as a driver shuttle on 5 November; 63342 had a new engine and many parts fitted in-house and was awaiting a return to service, it did so on 2 November.

On loan 66759 is out of service after its engine blew (depositing a large amount of oil on the road) at the bottom of Maldon Hill (about to go up) whilst on route 75 on 28 October.

67756 is also off road after being hit in the rear by a truck on St Botolph's Roundabout whilst on route 61 on 29 October. It possibly has a twisted sub-frame.

News of the Harwich routes. After the increase in double-deckers on 103/104 in September, from 5 October there was a marked decrease in double-deck workings, despite no change to the 103/104 timetable on Monday-Friday. Some journeys that had become regular double-deck workings reverted to single-deck e.g., 0900 Harwich - Colchester 104 and 1605 Colchester - Harwich 103. Then from 12 October the number of double-deckers increased again, to two-four per day. The actual journeys worked by double-deckers change from day to day, for example 0900 Harwich - Colchester 104 and 1605 Colchester - Harwich 103 can be either double-deck or single-deck. Some double-deckers work on 103/104 for part of the day, moving to / from services 62/B / 65 / 75 at other times. After the school half term holiday, all journeys were worked by five double-deckers on 2 & 3 November, no single-deckers were seen on these two days.

To illustrate the journeys being single-deck or double-deck operated, here is the morning peak on two days, a week apart:

0650 Harwich - Colchester 104, then on to service 62B: 67739 on 15 October, 32629 on 22nd

0712 Harwich - Colchester Middleborough, 0905 Colchester - Harwich 104: 32547 on 15 October, 67739 on 22nd

0720 Harwich - Colchester 103, 0850 Colchester - Harwich 104: 37053 on 15 October, 67741 on 22nd

0725 Colchester - Harwich 104, 0900 Harwich - Colchester 104: 63340 on 15 October, 37138 on 22nd.

A second bus still runs on 1440 Colchester - Harwich 104, but previously describing it as a duplicate was misleading, it has been discovered that it runs light from Colchester, then starts in service at Colchester Road, Lawford, at about 1510, so it is really an extra rather than a duplicate. The normal service bus returns on 1610 Harwich - Colchester 104, the extra returns light from Harwich to Colchester using the A120. However, this extra school bus did not resume from Monday 2 November after the school half term, it was not seen when the route was observed on 2, 3 & 5 November, when 1440 Colchester - Harwich 104 was a Volvo B7TL on each day.

So it is assumed that this extra school bus is no longer required if the 1440 Colchester - Harwich 104 is operated by a double-decker. Sightings on these journeys before November as follows:

12 October 67735 plus 37036 as extra; 13th 37017 plus 37140 as extra; 14th 32629 plus 32485 as extra; 15th 37053 plus 32628 as extra; 16th 37006 plus 67741 as extra; 19th 37017 and no extra school bus seen; 20th 37004 and 67736 as extra; 21st 37015 and 32547 as extra; 22nd 67741 and 37015 as extra; 23rd 32478 and no extra school bus seen; 26th-30th half term.

The main 102/103/104 service continued to be principally worked by Enviro 300s (although, as noted above, towards the end of the period covered double-deckers were becoming more common), but these are supplemented by a wide range of other types.

Seen between 12 October and 8 November were:

StreetLites 63332, 63333, 63340, 63341, 63343 (total 5)

Volvo B7RLE 66759, 66798, 66801, 66804, 66810, 66828, 66872, 66970 (total 8)

B7TL 32476, 32477, 32478, 32485, 32547, 32628, 32629, 32669, 32673, 37004, 37005, 37006, 37010, 37015, 37017, 37020, 37034, 37035, 37036, 37037, 37042, 37053, 37054, 37062 (Total 24, the first four ALX 400 bodied, the rest Geminis)

Volvo B9TL 37135, 37136, 37138, 37139, 37140 (Total 5).

Right: 66759, on loan from First West Yorkshire, and still with 'York' fleet names is one of the more unusual vehicles to have worked on the Harwich routes in recent weeks. It is seen at the Harwich terminus on 15 October 2020.

It has since been taken out of service with a blown engine, details above. **David Edwards**



Some highlights: 20 October 37004, 37010, 37015 and 37139 on 103/104 with 37004 later on evening 102; 21st 37015, 37017, 37054 and 37062 on 103/104 with 37054 later on evening 102; 25th 66798 and 66810 on Sunday 102; 31st 32476 and 32628 on 103/104, unusual for a Saturday, normally single-deck operated on Saturdays; 1 November 37017, 37036, 37042 on Sunday 102, still interworked with service 75, previous Sundays had been Enviro 300 operated; 2nd 32477, 32628, 37020, 37035, 37140 were the five double-deckers referred to above on 103/104, with 37140 later on evening 102; 3rd 32477, 32628, 37004, 37006, 37034 were the five double-deckers referred to above on 103/104, with 37004 later on evening 102; 7th 63332, 63333 and 66872 on 103/104; 8th 37042, 37053 and 37054 on Sunday 102.

66806 was on loan from Chelmsford on 5 November, on 62/B during the day, but in the evening, it made it to the coast at Clacton on 74B. No reports of it on 6th-8th, then on 9th it was back in service at Chelmsford. During half-term week, 30564 & 30567 were not needed on route 17 so were used as driver shuttles, the former seen on 26th & 27th, the latter on 29th and 1 November. 32485 (13 November) and 37010 (31 October) on 74B. 37062 on school route 67C on 4 & 5 November, this is normally the preserve of 37005. 66803 on 71 (11 November). 66970 on driver shuttles on 1 November. 67735 (13 November) and 67738 (the next day) on 70.

Former Colchester Scania 62410 (YS03 ZKF), now with Dan's Travel, was back in the town on 17 October operating Greater Anglia rail replacement service.

Revis Autos have vacated the former small First Essex depot on Haven Road.

Chelmsford

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CF. All dates October 2020 except where stated.)

Recently acquired 42956 (see EBN 676) has e-Leather seats. Recently repainted 69434 (see EBN 678) has had its seats retrimmed with e-Leather.

School services. 36838 on 525 (20th & 21st). 44913 continues to almost exclusively work on routes S57 / S32, although it is used on normal services on Saturdays (e.g., 73 on 24th & 31st plus 7 November, 565 on 14 November) and also during half-term week.

Other unusual / interesting workings as follows. 32482 (20th), 32551 (26th), 32642 (20th) and 32676 (27th) on 71E. 32483 (4 November) and 32672 (19 October) on driver shuttles. 32631 on 71X (21st) and 350 (29th). X30 Scania on short working 42s: 36839 (28th), 36840 (12th), 36842 (26th). This batch of vehicles continue to see regular service on 70 & 71X. 42923 on 70 (12th). 44662 on 14 (21st) and 70 (Sunday 25th). 66873 (12 November) & 69429 (9 November) unusual Volvo B7RLEs these days on X30. Re the latter, First Essex tweeted that a journey had been cancelled because the bus had broken down, so this may well have been the replacement vehicle. 67169 (23rd) & 67170 (22nd) on 45. 67167 (10th) & 67171 (15th) on Park & Ride. Conversely, Park & Ride liveried vehicles on normal routes: 67191 on 36 group (27th & 30th), 67192 on 31 & 36 groups (4 November), 67193 on 36 group

& 42A (23rd), on 42 group (29th), 67196 on 31 & 36 groups (21st & 22nd), on 32 and 36 group (28th), on 70, 71 & 36 (30th) and on S42A on 4 & 5 November (see photo on page 9).

Basildon & Hadleigh

(All vehicles listed below allocated to BN except where stated. All dates October 2020 except where stated.)

Some vehicles were on loan to Basildon around the school half term period, which was Saturday 24 October - Sunday 1 November inclusive: CF32482 was at BN on 26th & 27th (on 25 all day both days), not yet reported back in service at Chelmsford but that may be because it has been used on school routes; CF32484 was at BN from 26th to 31st, back in service at Chelmsford on 2 November; HH33134 was at BN from 23rd to 29th, back in service at Hadleigh on 31st; HH44006 was at BN from 24th to 31st, back in service at Hadleigh on 2 November; CF66794 was at BN from 23rd to 31st, back in service at Chelmsford on 2 November; CR66872 was at BN from Colchester from 22nd to 2 November, on the 2nd it worked on route 8 from BN in the morning and routes 175/4 & 71A from CR in the afternoon and evening; CR66971 was at BN from 25th to 31st, back in service at Colchester on 1 November.

Route 9 (usually StreetLites) continues to have a number of, usually at least three, Enviro 400s running each day. On 5 November four were noted, 33559, 33563, 33567 & 33572. On 7 October 33570 on the 9 failed in Brentwood High Street and is seen right being prepared for recovery (**Sue Stewart**).

More unusual vehicles on the route in the past month have been ALX 400 Volvo on loan to BN, CF32484 (26th - very unusual), Presidents 33086

(13th plus 3 November) and 33178 (13th & 28th), mini-Enviro 200s 44908 (14th & 17th plus 12 November), 44909 (17th, 27th & 31st) and 44910 (12th & 13th), on loan to BN Enviro 200 HH44006 on 28th & 29th (again very unusual), Volvo B7RLEs 66819 (12th) and 66821 (14th), Enviro 200 MMC 67165 (20th).



As reported in EBN 678, route 94 had reverted to a near normal pattern with a single and double-decker sharing the route, but from 19th it went back to being mainly all saloons, although 33572 was in use on 31st. Mini-Enviro 200s 44908, 44909 & 44910 have made frequent appearances on the route since the 19th. a type previously not normally seen. On loan HH44006 was in use on 24th & 27th.

School services. 32660 on 825 on its first day of service with First Essex, 19th. NBC liveried 33424 on 625 on its first day back in service since March, 10 November, and again on 12th. 33504 & 33507 continued to operate on a mixture of schools (625 & 825) and normal services over the past five weeks. 33545 on 625 on 6 November. 33555 on 825 on 9 November. 33559 on 625 on 11 November. 33570 on 825 on 5 & 6 November. 33572 on 625 on 11 November. Further to EBN 678, no reports of 36148 in use, but 36153 & 36161 continue on the 561. Two of these three red Volvo B9TLs were stored at Chelmsford depot during half-term week. 47653 continues to operate mainly on 725, sometime just on that route, sometimes on other routes the same day, for example on 9, 12 & 13 November it worked on route 16 after the 725. It also worked on normal routes during half-term week. On two days when it was not in use, 4 & 5 November, 47656 took its place on the 725. At Hadleigh, 36141 (on 822), 36143 (827) and 36156 (820) continue to operate exclusively on their allocated routes.

Other unusual / interesting workings as follows. Double-deckers on 16: 33551 (10 November) and 33552 (31 October). Also, Airlink liveried 67163 on this route on 31st. Former X30 liveried 67165 on X10 on 4 November (first report of an ex-X30 vehicle on the X10). This vehicle on 100 on 11 & 19 October. Also on X10, 69904 (24th) & 69905 (25th). HH47644 on 25 (10th). HH33384 on short working 28 (19th).

Sources: own observations, and with thanks to R Appleton, S Barham, D Bell, W Bell, N Clark, T Clark, J Collins, D Edwards, J Elliott, R Hannah, W Morrison, R Newman, G Norris, J Podgorski, D Pretty, C Stewart, R West, First Essex, Bustimes, Facebook, Bus Lists on the Web, Flickr, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.



by **Peter Mansbridge** with thanks to Lee Burvill-Eckett, Richard Delahoy, Matthew Evans, Keith Sadler, M&M Staffing and Bustimes

Southend External Hires

The coach hires have continued on schooldays as listed last month, although in the latter part of October a couple of runs by Grange Travel were suspended whilst King Edmund school was temporarily closed due to building works.

After the half term holiday, from 2 November further workings were observed:

Service 1, 0707 Shoebury to Rayleigh - M&M Staffing;

Service 7, 0727 Shoebury to Rayleigh - M&M Staffing;

Service 8, 1459 Landwick to Hockley - Peter Godward Coaches;

Service 7, 1457 Shoebury to Rayleigh - M&M Staffing;

Service 1, 1456 Shoebury to Rayleigh - M&M Staffing - from November 4;

Service 6, 1527 Temple Sutton to Southend - Vectare Ltd - from November 4.

Arriva's website timetables have not yet been updated to include these trips, but all have been observed multiple times.

Additional coaches noted on the **Grange Travel** workings are a tri-axle Mercedes Tourismo, BN17 JRV, originally with Shearings (from 21 October onwards, illustrated on page 16) and a further Van Hool Astromega, YH63 CWM (from early November).

M&M Staffing only used their ex-Blackpool Dennis Trident for a few days in October, reverting to a Neoplan coach thereafter, apparently at Arriva's request. Then, from 2 November, M&M gained extra workings and the Trident reappeared, along with an all-white Wright StreetLite DF, SK68 TXP, which is on short-term loan to M&M for about a month whilst Neoplan coach MM68 BUS is away being fitted with a wheelchair lift. A further M&M tri-axle Neoplan also noted is MM15 BUS, not seen previously. M&M increased to three afternoon workings from 4 November. On Friday 13 November, for one day only, one of the M&M workings was covered by GB15 KCL, a tri-axle Irizar i6 of Klarners Coaches, to free up an M&M coach for a private hire.

See 'Other Operators' on page 23 for further news of this operator plus a photo of the StreetLite working in Southend.

Peter Godward Coaches of Wickford then also made a re-appearance from 2 November on another new working; noted so far are Mercedes Tourimos BF61 HCL and BF61 HCO.

Vectare Ltd - a Gardner Travel liveried Scania / Irizar coach YN55 PXD appeared on 4 November on service 6 in the afternoon, but with no destination / route number showing. Then on Monday 9 November, Mercedes Sprinter minibus WN69 FYL, in Vectare fleet livery, was noted and again later that week, with programmed blind display.

Thus, it appears there are now no fewer than ELEVEN vehicles working for Arriva Southend in the afternoon on school duplicates and four in the mornings, plus use of the two Colchester P&R buses crewed by Arriva Southend drivers both morning and afternoon. They are provided by Grange Travel x 5, M&M Staffing x 3, Vectare x 1, Westbus x 1, Peter Godward x 1.

Southend Internal Hires

The loans of Colchester Dart 1565 & Enviro 200s 4072/3 for service and City Airport E200 YX68 UUL for shuttle duties continued into November. The Colchester P&R buses 4072/3 are normally only used for school duplication but during half-term week at the end of October were in use on all-day services, generally on route 1 but with 4073 making an appearance on service 9 on 27 October and on the 7 on the morning of Sunday 1 November. 4072 saw all day use on service 7 & 8 on 30 October.

Other News

The morning double deck Arriva working on service 7, 0633 Shoebury to Ashingdon, has remained open to the public rather than being made an 'S' journey and is duplicated by an Arriva single decker (updating the report in EBN 677).

Also in Southend, it was announced in late October that the travel enquiry office in Southend Travel Centre, which had been closed temporarily due to the pandemic, will not be re-opening and is now permanently closed. It would appear that Arriva have now ceased producing printed publicity, at least locally, referring passengers instead to the website and app. Photo right taken by **Richard Delahoy**.





Sandwiched between First Essex and Chambers buses, the sole double-decker in the Arriva Colchester fleet, 4459 (MX61 AXW), a Wright Gemini 2 DL, climbs North Hill on 23 September 2020. Built as a semi-integral using a VDL DB300 underframe, the slightly squashed top deck appearance compared to other Gemini bodies denotes that it was one of the special lower-height versions specified by Arriva; it started its life on Merseyside and was previously with Arriva Southend.

Richard Delahoy

It is not very often that an Arriva bus visits Clacton, however a sad occasion brought one (4323) to the town on 21 October 2020. One of the lifeboat crew there was a mechanic at Arriva Colchester who recently passed away following a sudden cardiac arrest at the young age of only 48; he had been a crew member for 11 years, during which time he had helped save 18 lives. There was a drive past the lifeboat station in Hastings Avenue and the road was lined with about 200 people to pay respect.



Text and photo by RNLI supporter and Group member **Terry Wiffen** who was one of the attendees.



Above: Grange Travel of Gravesend continue to provide coaches to duplicate selected Arriva Southend journeys on schooldays. BN17 JRV is an ex-Shearings Mercedes Tourismo, stripped of its Grand Tourer branding and now in a plain dark blue livery; none of the Grange coaches seen so far actually carry fleet names. It is waiting at Rayleigh Station on 23 October 2020 ready to work the 1521 service 8, a journey that goes through to Wakering although some of the duplicates turn short once empty. It is standing ahead of one of the Colchester Park & Ride buses that will work the 1501 service 7 duplicate. **Richard Delahoy.** Below: details on next page.



by **Mark Lloyd**

with thanks to John Podgorski, Nigel Turner, Essex Buses Yahoo group & Heddingham website

Significant Allocation Changes

519	Konectbus to SYu	registration LX05 EZZ, this is long term VOR (has been at Chambers depot for several months).
586	CN to KN	by 3 November
587	CN to HD	by 16 October

Fleet News

Further to EBN 678, 601 & 602 (SN10 CFE/F) have been repainted from old style Konnectbus livery to Heddingham livery, the former by 2 November and the latter by 15 October. 602 initially was without any advertisements but by 23 October it had received a nearside advert only.

264 (EU59 AYP) has had a partial make over, with new front quarter dash panels, straightening of lower panels and a general paint tidy up including silver wheels. The quarter panels are the later version turned outwards at the base which updates the vehicle's look. Open topper 500 (PL51 LDJ) has moved from Heddingham to Kelvedon for winter storage.

Service News

Heddingham in early October supplied vehicles for the rail replacement services Ely - Downham Market - King's Lynn. On 25 October Heddingham provided 458 (YN05 HFH) and 460 (YN05 HFF) on local rail replacement Colchester - Clacton for Greater Anglia.

Heddingham's evening service 352 Chelmsford - Braintree - Halstead has recently been diverted due to works, Nigel Turner kindly reports that due to overnight road closures at High Garrett between the Four Releet and Foley House Corner on the A131 from 8-27 October, journeys were diverted at Bocking via Bovingdon Road, Beazley End and Park Hall Road to Gosfield. Although the Bocking - Beazley End section had a service (latterly Stephensons) until 2016, the Beazley End - Gosfield section has only ever seen stage services in the early-mid 1950s, viz Eastern National 31 Braintree - Gosfield - Wethersfield Air Base from 4 May 1953 to 15 June 1957 and the even shorter lived Eastern National 24 Halstead - Gosfield - Wethersfield Air Base which only lasted from 24 May 1953 to 27 September 1953.

Other News

Apart from the seats directly behind the driver, Heddingham and Chambers do not have marked seating positions, such as on First Essex vehicles. On Go-Ahead East Anglia buses, the customers are advised to sit near the window leaving the aisle seats free and also to try and leave a spare row in front and behind when choosing a seat. See notice fitted within 851 (AO57 EZL) right (**Mark Lloyd**). Konectbus identical versions are fitted to at least 602.



Ford Transit E113 UHR has been repaired, it was expected to be sold but has returned to the service fleet. 9001 (EX61 NZL) went to DJ Spall for scrap by 29 October. Withdrawn and sold 9004 (W761 TRE) Vauxhall van has been used for rescue training by Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service at Nayland. Vito 9014 (RJ56 TYK) - which originally was the Anglianbus Traffic Control Minibus has moved to Clacton.

Caption to Photo on Previous Page

As reported in EBN 676, Scania OmniLink 455 (with cherished registration AN61 LAN) has been repainted from Anglianbus livery into Chambers livery and is seen having completed the 0851 short eight-minute run on route 753 from Thomas Gainsborough School to Sudbury Bus Station on 21 September 2020. It would then go on to work the 0905 service 784 Sudbury to Colchester, via the A134.
Mark Lloyd

by **Richard Delahoy** with thanks to Dave Arnold, Peter Clark, John Podgorski and the companies.

All routes (including schools) are now running to normal timetables, after Braintree routes 9/A, 21 & 30 reverted to full timetables from 12 October. The changes to school services from September are permanent and related to changes in travel patterns.

Suffolk services 384/385 (Stowmarket to Bury St Edmunds) have been registered by Stephenson's from 7 September but remain operated by Galloway from Mendlesham 'on hire', generally using Solos 331-333. The PVR is two on Mon-Fri and one on Saturdays.

Other Suffolk service news is the registration of commercial school day services 310/311/A from Exning / Newmarket to Bury St Edmunds from 4 January, requiring three buses and currently operated by Suffolk Norse, who are giving up the routes.

A total of 15 Galloway vehicles are now providing peak time school 'Covid duplicates' for Stephenson's / NIBS, 13 in Essex and two in Suffolk. These are crewed by Galloway drivers and with one or two exceptions, return to Mendlesham each night. The entire Galloway coach fleet (plus the few remaining buses) are utilised on this work alongside Galloway's routine school / college commitments which include three double-deckers. The eight National Express liveried coaches are currently laid up as the diagrams they had been working in the summer have been suspended again.

Galloway coach 162, 6037 PP, was noted on loan to Stephenson's for two days in mid-October for the Colchester High School contract whilst the usual coach, 200, was off road.

Further new Ticketer machines with EMV/QR code capability have been purchased, meaning that the majority of Stephenson's / NIBS operations can now accept contactless payment cards. The remaining earlier machines are concentrated on peak time school movements carrying mainly pass holders. Stephenson's and NIBS have recently joined the 'myTrip' app for mobile phones, showing live tracking data for buses. Of interest to Enthusiasts, this shows the fleet number of each active bus and the route / location, although it doesn't show the destination or timetable. The app also enables the purchase of various weekly / monthly tickets.



Above: one of the more obscure routes in south-east Essex is ECC contract 63, operated by NIBS. It only runs on Wednesdays and Fridays to provide shopping links, running from Rayleigh via Hullbridge, Lower Hockley, Hockley, Hawkwell, Stroud Green, the Tesco store on the A127, Rochford, Shopland, Barling and Wakering, with two journeys over the whole route and a short working from Tesco back to Rayleigh in the late morning. Emerging from Barling Road at Barrow Hall Road, Stonebridge is Enviro 200 419 on Friday 30 October 2020. Identical buses of sister company Stephenson's pass here on the 14, Southend to Barling, Wakering and then Shoebury or Foulness Island. Telegraph poles and overhead cables are a photographic hazard in country locations like this! **Richard Delahoy**



Above: A scene unique to 2020. Stephensons 467 on route 9, surrounded by Covid-19 signs, exits the now closed to traffic Braintree High Street on 12 August.

Right: the same bus on the same route, this time on 14 October, exiting the new contra flow bus lane in Fairfield Road, turning right into South Street on the new routing introduced since the closure of the High Street. As explained in the First Essex report on page 13 of EBN 678, the closure of the High Street is permanent and is not Covid related; pedestrianisation had been a long-term aim of the local council and was not a reaction to the pandemic in the way that some other pedestrian friendly schemes in the country have been.



Both photos **David Moth**

The Optare Metrocity demonstrator 501 (YX67 FXE) returned to Optare on 30 September 2020. Its place on Colchester services 4 & 11 has been taken by an Optare Versa V1100; on 9 October 146 (YK08 EPC) and 152 (YK08 EPV) worked these services. The other Essex County Council tendered service, Clacton - Mistley 2/2A, continues to be worked by an Optare Versa V1100 as well.

On Saturdays, Optare Versa V1100s work services 92 Ipswich - Manningtree and 93 Ipswich - Colchester, instead of Scania OmniCity double-deckers. However, on some weekends the Scania OmniCities have worked into Essex on planned rail replacement work for Greater Anglia. On 17 October 32/40/43/44/45 (YR61 RRU/RUW/RVL/RRZ/RVE) were noted on Ipswich - Witham, Manningtree - Colchester - Witham and Walton / Clacton - Colchester - Witham services. On 24th 37/40/43/44/45 (YR61 RUH/RUW/RVL/RRZ/RVE) were noted on Ipswich - Manningtree - Colchester - Marks Tey. Then on Sunday 25th 37/40 (YR61 RUH/RUW) were on Colchester - Clacton. In addition, two of the three Mercedes Citaros in the Ipswich Buses fleet were on rail replacement services on 25 October, 154 (BF65 HVU) worked Colchester - Newbury Park Underground Station, and 155 (BF65 HVV) worked Colchester - Manningtree.



Two of the 18 Scania OmniCity double-deckers in the Ipswich Buses fleet, 46 (YR61 RPX) and 47 (YR61 RVA), were leased, not owned. These have gone off lease, and subsequently have been purchased by Border Buses of Beccles. Replacements are three Scania OmniCity double-deckers from RATP London United, via Ensignbus. They are YN08 MRV/MRX/MRY, Ipswich Buses fleet numbers 46/47/48 which have been re-registered SGZ 3346/3347/3348. They have been converted to single-door and fitted with seat belts, so are suitable for Ipswich School contracts. First into service was the new 46, SGZ 3346, which became a regular performer on Ipswich School contract 7 from Hitcham and Hadleigh in Suffolk. Next was the new 47, SGZ 3347, noted on Ipswich School contract 2A from Feering on 5 and 7 October. However, on some other days in October, up to the Ipswich School half term holiday 19 October to 30 October, the

Enviro 400 MMC demonstrator 500 (YX19 ONU) worked this contract instead of 47. It is seen above left in Ivry Street, Ipswich, on 29 September, after working the 2A from Feering (**Robert Appleton**). The black & white photo doesn't do justice to its shocking pink livery! This demonstrator has now returned to Alexander Dennis and 47 worked the Ipswich School contract again on 3 November. At the time these notes were compiled 48 (SGZ 3348) had not entered service.

Whilst I listed Ipswich School contract 2A as operating from Kelvedon in EBN 678 page 21, as per the Ipswich School website, checking further on this website shows the start / finishing point is actually New Lane, Feering.

Ipswich town service 4, Tower Ramparts - Felixstowe Road - Bixley, gained an increased frequency timetable from 4 October, and it is now normally worked by the two Optare Solos, 241 (YN04 LWK) and 245 (YJ05 XNY). Therefore, an Optare Solo no longer works the morning RC1 contract at 0720 Thorington Crossroads - Wivenhoe - Colchester - Suffolk Rural College, Otley. On 15 October, Ipswich Buses oldest single-decker, 137 (SN53 AVP) Transbus Super Pointer Dart, worked this journey. 137 had worked this contract before, in September, see EBN 678 page 21. 137 should be the regular bus on RC1, on both the morning and afternoon journeys. It has been replaced on service 118/119 Ipswich - Framlingham by an Optare Versa V1100. However, on 22 October 106 (YX66 WCK), an Enviro 200, worked RC1. 137 was back on RC1 on 3 November.

The school half term holiday produced a couple of unusual workings. On 28 October, Enviro 200 106 (YX66 WCK) worked on Colchester services 4 & 11 instead of one of the Optare Versas. On the same day Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekka 62 (PJ54 YZV) spent most of the day on service 92 Ipswich - Manningtree instead of the usual Scania OmniCity.

One more Ipswich Buses service that just reaches Essex is school service 194, departing Langham at 0811 via Stratford St Mary to East Bergholt High School, returning from the school at 1545. The 194 is normally worked by a DAF DB250LF / East Lancs Lowlander. On 3 November, 55 (PN52 XBO) worked the morning journey. Ipswich Buses gained this service with the Carters Coach Services business on 27 May 2016.

The Ipswich Buses website now has a current fleet list, updated to November 2020. On the Home Page, scroll to the bottom and click on Enthusiasts. There is a description and photo of each bus type in the Ipswich Buses fleet, plus a downloadable and detailed two-page fleet list.



Dealer Stock Movements October 2020

Vehicles In

From **First West Yorkshire**: Volvo B7L MV02 VEH
From **Go South Coast**: Volvo B11RTs BW16 CLV/Y/Z/LCL/M/N/O/P/T, BV66 WNX/Y/Z/WOA-D/WOH/J
From **Lothian Buses**: Volvo B7RLEs SK07 CGY/CFY/CGG, SN57 DCV/X/DCF/DDA, SN58 BYM/R
From **Metroliner**: Volvo B7TL LK54 FWP, MANs LK07 AYE/L/N, LK57 AYT/W/EHU
From **RATP London**: Versas Y160 KGA/E/F/G/P, Y112 PKX/Y/PLF
From **Rubicon Classic Travel**: Tridents LK51 UYE, LN51 GMF
From **Stagecoach Midlands**: Tridents LV52 HEJ, KX04 RVJ, MX54 LPV, Solos KN04 XKJ/K/L
From **Stagecoach Oxford**: Trident LX55 EPZ

Vehicles Out

Volvo B7RLE SN58 BYM: **Als Coaches, Liverpool**
Dart HW54 BTX: **Avondale, Glasgow**
Volvo B7TL LT52 WVO: **Confidence, Leicester**
Enviro 200s AE59 AWA/C/F/G: **Cymru Coaches, Swansea**
Trident T510 SSG, Volvo B7TL X579 EGK, E400 SN09 CFF (now partial open toppers): **First South West**
Volvo B7RLE SN55 BJV, Scania YN08 DHP: **Grayscroft Coaches, Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire**
Scania YS03 ZKB/K: **Mike Lawrenson, Preston**. These were ex First Essex 62407 and 65690 respectively.
Enviro 400s LK58 KGJ/O/HG/H: **Notts & Derby Buses**
Enviro 400 LK09 EKO: **People's Bus, Liverpool**
Scania YN04 GLV: **Redfern Travel, Mansfield**
Trident AE06 GZV: **Smiths Coaches, Stockport**
Volvo B11RT BW16 LCL/M/N/O: **South West Coaches, Yeovil**
Volvo B7RLE SN57 DDA, SN58 BYR: **MP Travel Manchester**
MAN LK07 AYN, Solos YJ09 MHU, YJ11 EJC, Scania YJ60 KGX: **Wealden PSV, Tonbridge, Kent**
Enviro 200s YX10 BDU/BFF: **Wexford Bus, Eire**
Volvo B11RT BV66 WOB: **Youngs Coaches, Cambridge**

The following all to Shelton Motors for scrap

Tridents LN51 GKV/ GNP, LV52 HEJ, LX03 ORV, LX55 EPZ.
LN51 GNP was ex First Essex 33080.
MANs LK07 AYW/AYT/AYC/AYE, LK57 EHU
Solos KN04 XKJ, YJ57 EHD
Dart SN05 DZX. This was ex First Essex 42561.
B7TL YJ51 RRV
B7L MV02 VCX
Enviro 200s YX58 FPF, YX10 BFM
Enviro 300s VX53 VKB, VX54 MPZ/MRY
VX54 MPZ was ex First Essex 67638. It is seen right at
Tollgate Sainsbury's on route 65 on 18 December 2019. It
was in Urban 2 livery with a pink front, as per 66971 on the
rear cover of this issue. **Adam Kelleher**



Ensign Fleet

124 & 125 sold to NAT, Cardiff. Enviro 400s 970-3 sold to Notts & Derby buses. Additions to replace these are 976/7/8/9 LK58 KGU/KHM/KHU/CNV. The Ensign Enviro 200s on hire to Yellow Buses Bournemouth have been replaced by former Halton Enviro 200s.



by Ian Ransom with thanks to Adam Barham

Acquired Vehicles

Dennis Trident / Alexander V130 MEV, formerly with Acme Travel, Molehill Green, but acquired from G Bishop of Downham Market, by September 2020. This vehicle was new to Stagecoach London in November 1999 as TA130.

Former Hong Kong Leyland Olympian / Alexander J590 CEV (FC 7328) from Flagfinders, Braintree, by October 2020, although a decision on its use has yet to be made.

Mercedes Benz Sprinter / KVC conversion SN05 FCF (W1 WET) ex Woodhouse Executive Travel, Sawbridgeworth, October 2020. It will be re-registered DB54 PAN in due course.

Disposals

DAF DB250LF / East Lancs DC52 PAN to Lloyd, Machenlyth, August 2020.

Volvo B12M / Plaxton Paragon AB02 PAN (WV02 EUP) to Glovers Coaches, Derby, after re-registration back to WV02 EUP, August 2020. Leyland Olympian coach / ECW B693 BPU was sold a couple of years ago for preservation, although it had remained in Panther livery. It has recently been sold to a new owner in North East England for continued preservation. This vehicle was new to Eastern National in March 1985 as 4505. Work has now begun on repairing and replacing panels. If anyone has any interior photos taken when with EN or Thamesway, which would be of help with the restoration, please send copies to the Acting Editor for forwarding on and also for possible future inclusion in EBN.

Leyland Olympian / ECW J114 KCW (BIG 9249) sold for preservation July 2020.

The remains of Enviro 200 YX09 AEZ were sold for scrap in late 2019 to Walton Salvage.

Other Fleet News

Volvo B7TL / Alexander BIG 7758 and Volvo B12B / Plaxton Panther DC53 PAN are back in use, by September 2020, after being SORN during the first lockdown.

Dennis Dart SLF / Plaxton BIG 9856 (X346 YGU), Volvo B12B / Plaxton AB53 PAN (LK53 KXB) and Plaxton Primo SB07 PAN are all SORN.

Enviro 200 YX10 BDY, having been acquired earlier this year and used regularly since March, is due to be repainted from all red into fleet livery in November.

The other former Eastern National Leyland Olympian coach / ECW D511 PPU (EN 4511) is still owned and has a Class 6 MOT but is currently SORN.

Former East Yorkshire Leyland Olympian BIG 9210 (N592 BRH) remains in use.

Services

To allow for social distancing a duplicate bus is running on services 81 and 118 on schooldays at school times only.

Right: Panther Travel VB08 PAN in Dedham High Street on 8 September 2020 on school contract 2 from Langham to Manningtree High School.

Robert Appleton



Other Operators

by **Roger A Smith** with thanks to the PSV Circle and Richard Delahoy

Don, Great Dunmow

The following, all Dennis Tridents with East Lancs bodies, are here from Lodge, High Easter: T273 BPR (H51/33F), T274 BPR (H45/29F), T277 BPR (H45/29F) and V428 DRA (H53/34F). Alexander bodied Volvo B10M K733 DAO (B49F) has gone from here.

EOS / Swallow Coach Company

Scania OmniCity 701 (YR10 AZO), of erstwhile operators EOS & Swallow Coaches, was acquired by Cymru Coaches, Swansea, (via Ensignbus) in August 2020. This was one of the vehicles still taxed as at Swallow Coach Company's demise at the end of March 2020, as reported in EBN 673.

Phillips, South Woodham Ferrers

MF51 CLJ, a Mercedes Benz 411D with Olympus C16F body, has gone from here.

Porter (trading as Stan's), Great Totham

This operator's licence, number PF0000078, has been surrendered. No vehicles were recorded.

M&M Staffing, Cooksmill Green

Neoplan MM10 BUS (C49FT) has reverted to its original registration MX10 DFK and has been sold to Greenslades Tours, Exeter, Devon. The current fleet comprises:

Neoplan Tourliners MM15 BUS (ex OU15 ZVX), MM18 BUS (ex OU18 ZTB) and MM68 BUS (new with this mark).

MM68 BUS is currently in Portugal at Mobipeople being fitted with a wheelchair lift (this vehicle was illustrated on page 17 of EBN 678 whilst working for Arriva).

Dennis Trident PNO4 XDK (this was also illustrated on page 17 of EBN 678 whilst working for Arriva).

AEC Routemaster CUV 173C (RM2173) which is under restoration with a hoped-for completion date of next spring.

Whilst MM68 BUS is away for lift fitment, an all-white Wright StreetLite bus, SK68 TXP, is on loan. In turn this has been one of the three M&M vehicles that have been working duplicates for Arriva Southend (see Arriva report on page 14 for further details of coaches / buses on hire to them for school duplicates). SK68 TXP is seen below on Prittlewell Chase near Southend Hospital on 11 November with commendably programmed blind display. **Richard Delahoy**



WNO 484 - the Welsh Exile from Essex

by Chris Stewart

Bristol KSW5G 4206 (WNO 484) was delivered new to Eastern National from ECW at Lowestoft on 6 November 1953. Like all K-family vehicles with EN, it had a lowbridge body with sunken side gangway upstairs but also had staggered upper saloon seats as fitted to a number of later KSWs for the BTC Tilling group. Such arrangements became obsolete and indeed archaic the following year, of course, with the introduction of the Bristol Lodekka. When 4206 was new, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services (WMS) was still operating as a separate company, although under EN control as a result of which their red livery had given way in 1952 to the parent operator's Tilling green. Several of WNO's sisters joined the Westcliff fleet but the two were amalgamated in 1955 and the Hicks fleet absorbed at the same time.

Westcliff had run open top Bristol G05Gs along Southend seafront from 1937-39 and double-deck operation resumed after the war in 1949. Various elderly AEC Regents dating from 1930-32 (albeit all with later Tilling, ECW or Beadle bodies) were acquired by WMS and EN between 1949 and 1954 from Brighton Hove & District. Some arrived as closed toppers and were converted in Essex, others already being open top or convertibles. Several had Gardner 5LW engines as did four 1936/37 Bristol G0s which also came from BH&D, and a 1935 Dennis Lance which WMS bought but which didn't last long enough to pass into the combined EN fleet.

By the time the WMS and EN fleets were renumbered in a common series in 1954 there were 18 cream open tops at work, both at Southend and Clacton (with Dovercourt Bay later featuring for one season). Changes at Southend saw the Corporation join in the operations there from 1956, using ex EN (former Westcliff, Benfleet and Canvey) Daimlers, and that same year the first former City Coach Company Leyland PD1A (NVX 309) was also converted by EN. Between 1958 and 1961 a further 11 Leylands (two ex Hicks and the rest ex City) were rebuilt and took over almost completely, the exception being CAP 131 which was a 1940 K5G convertible bought from BH&D in 1960 and used at Clacton. CAP was converted to a tree lopper in 1962 (replacing one of the Regents).

Meanwhile, our subject KSW spent its entire lifetime as a closed topper based at Chelmsford, being renumbered 1429 in 1954 and becoming the depot driver training bus in 1959. In this role, it gained a removable window behind the cab but still performed normal duties as well. The KSW replaced Leyland TD2 3428 which had been at CF as a full-time training bus since 1952 (wearing a dark green livery). WNO 484 became 2386 when the fleet was renumbered for the second time in 1964 (in strict chassis number order within the various classes, hence a number of apparent anomalies - including these last KSWs).



Above: 1429 heads down Duke Street past the bus station and garage in summer 1960 (the Rome Olympics, as mentioned on the Daily Star newspaper headline, were 25 August to 11 September). **Photobus**

During the winter of 1965-6, ten KSWs (WNO 474/5/8-85) were rebuilt to open top, the work involving removal of the sunken gangway and installation of seats in a conventional layout on the upper deck. Unusually, there were considerable differences between those done at Central Works (Chelmsford) - including 2386 - and those which emerged from Prittlewell Works. The new windshield arrangement was completely different, Prittlewell buses having straight bases to the new front windows while the CW version was curved, and the small side window also differed in shape. Prittlewell fitted additional chrome beading and there were other details which marked out the location of the work.

By the time the KSWs took over at Southend, the eastern end of the open top services 67 and 68 had not long been swapped over, EN's 67 running to Temple Sutton and SCT's 68 to Shoeburyness, but from as early as 1967 crew shortages meant EN buses being hired to SCT to maintain the services so the distinction between the two operators became rather more blurred. After a mere two seasons in use as open tops, two of the KSWs (WNO 481/2, 2385/81) were sold to Eastern Counties for use at Felixstowe and Cromer, while at the end of the third season WNO 485 (2387) was converted to a tree lopper to replace CAP 131. 2386 stayed at Southend throughout its EN open top career, until this was cut short in late July 1973 when it mounted the pavement and collided with a house in Eastwood, near the Kent Elms Corner terminus of the 67, while on hire to SCT.

Delicensed for disposal in September 1973 and kept at Prittlewell, an unexpected move saw it sold to South Wales Transport in September 1974. This is sometimes quoted as having been for spares, but there is no mention of this in ENEG newsletters at the time. SWT only had one KSW by then, a 6LW engined recovery vehicle with cut down body (former United Welsh HWN 339) which was already out of use and had nothing for which a KSW5G would really provide any useful parts. What probably happened is that it was listed as suitable for spares when offered round other NBC operators, as surplus vehicles were at the time. After arrival at Swansea, 2386 was in fact rebuilt for further service using parts from HWN, most likely the radiator, moulded dash panel and cab window surround / glass. The front wing, however, looks from photographs to have been new.

At about the same time as 2386's accident, the possibility of replacing EN's remaining KSWs with convertible Bristol FS6Gs, also from BH&D (or more correctly Southdown - BHD), was also considered, although the Chief Engineer eventually decided against it for reasons I can't now recall. This may have had some bearing on the decision not to repair 2386. As it was, EN's four remaining service KSWs re-appeared in 1974 resplendent in NBC white and green and continued in service throughout the decade. Two survived for a lot longer, outliving four FLF conversions, two VR conversions, Southend's PD3s which replaced the Daimlers and indeed four Fleetlines which ousted the PD3s. One, 2383 (WNO 479), even lasted as a heritage vehicle until the second decade of the 21st Century, gaining a Sema number along the way (90230), before eventually being sold for preservation in October 2010.



Above: 2386 rests at Southend's Kursaal stop on a short working on 12 June 1969. **Steve Hardiman**

Whatever the reason for its acquisition, WNO 484 made a surprise addition to the SWT fleet, which was the 1971 amalgamation under NBC auspices of the BET South Wales fleet with the former BTC/THC United Welsh (with its fleet of Bristols) and the much smaller BET fleets of Thomas Bros, Port Talbot and Neath & Cardiff Luxury Coaches. Only Thomas Bros had operated open tops, running at times two AEC Regents and three former BH&D Bristol K5Gs (including the now preserved former Bristol Tramways GHT 127) on an Aberavon Beach service, but these had gone in 1969 before the enlarged SWT was formed. Before entering service, WNO was painted NBC red with a white band and was numbered 500. On 23 May 1975 it introduced a new open top service from the City centre around Swansea Bay to Mumbles (along the route of the former Mumbles Railway, closed in 1960) and beyond Bracelet Bay to Limeslade - mostly fairly flat and not too much bother for a Gardner 5LW. Another surprise was to follow in 1977, when 500 gained silver livery with a white band for HM The Queen's Jubilee, as illustrated below and in colour on the inside front cover.

Along the way, SWT bought two KSWs from Bristol Omnibus for spares. Highbridge KSW6G WHW 816 (City fleet C8375) had been withdrawn by BOC in October 1974 and passed to SWT in July 1975. Fitting a 6LW engine to a KSW5G is not a straightforward swap otherwise presumably HWN's engine might have been put in WNO, but as it was the engine from WHW 816 was returned to BOC as part of the deal, being used along with others from KSWs to replace a Bristol BVW engine in an FLF. Later, lowbridge KSW6G OHY 934 (Country fleet L8087 and by then cream / orange trainer W130), which had been withdrawn by BOC in February 1977, was sold to SWT in May that year. By coincidence, sister bus OHY 935 (a KSW6B - the batch was split) worked in the Southend area for Castle Point Bus Company after sale by Bristol. Reports from February 1979 of OHY 934 being dumped (with HWN 339) on the scrap line at the former Thomas Bros depot of SWT (Port Talbot) are backed up by photographs, showing not very much other than vandalism damage and glass missing externally. WHW alongside was minus engine, radiator, front offside wing and headlights but again not much else obvious apart from glass (including the upper deck windows, for some reason).

500 was joined by some convertible VRs in 1977 which extended the open top routes beyond Mumbles and all continued in use until 1990, after privatisation of SWT and the change of fleet colours from red to two shades of green with red, yellow and white bands (carried by the VRs but not the KSW). 500 had been expected to be withdrawn in 1983 but, like its EN sisters, outlived much newer open tops in Swansea. Eventually the South Wales Transport Co Ltd (founded 1914) was renamed First Cymru Buses Ltd in March 1999 but 500 passed into preservation that month, having not, it would seem, been used since 1996. Since being bought for preservation a cream and red 'United Welsh' scheme has been carried which, whilst not authentic, suits the bus very well. Your scribe was privileged to drive two round trips to Limeslade and back during the Swansea Bus Museum's running day on 17 May 2014 during glorious sunshine.



Above: WNO 484 in various guises whilst in Wales. Captions on next page.

Captions to photos on previous page

Top row: 500 waits on the stand at Limeslade in its original SWT livery of NBC red and white on 24 August 1976. **Graham Jones**

Bottom row left: 500 in service at The Kingsway, Swansea in Silver Jubilee livery with a Welsh language offside fleet name during 1977. **Richard Delahoy Collection**

Bottom row right: 500 in cream and red livery with United Welsh fleet name, Limeslade 17 May 2014. **Chris Stewart**

Right: 500 back in NBC red, but now with 'Sky Rider' branding and the updated red / blue on white NBC symbol. Swansea 1983.

Paul Harvey

With thanks for assistance with the article to Graham Jones, Colin Sigston, Terry Clark, Steve Hardiman and the PSV Circle.



An Original Eastern National Bus?

by Chris Stewart



In November 1919 the National Omnibus and Transport Company Ltd (NOTC) purchased 42 AEC YC chassis from a batch of 180 that had been supplied to the LGOC in 1918. LGOC had run them as open 'lorry-buses' to help overcome a severe shortage of vehicles after the First World War. All had originally been registered in the 'LU xxxx' series. Before being sold they were returned to AEC where they were given an overhaul and re-registered with numbers allocated by the local Taxation. Most were rebodied as double-deckers, often with second-hand bodies purchased from LGOC following the scrapping of some of their AEC B-type chassis.

The bus seen here outside the Whitmore Arms in Orsett was originally registered LU 8191 before becoming HK 8958 in 1920 and given the NOTC fleet number 2088. It carried a rebuilt 52-seat body by Dodson which had been enlarged from one of the NOTC steam-car bodies. As buses did not reach Orsett until 1922, the photo, taken on route 32 Grays - Orsett - Stanford-Le-Hope, must date from between then and 1930. Most of the NOTC operations in Essex passed to Eastern National with effect from April 1930 but the Grays depot and services did not transfer until October 1930. It is possible that the photo was taken on the first day of operation in 1922, on one of the many short workings to Orsett. It is also possible that this bus formed part of the original Eastern National fleet, and so fits in well with the theme running through this issue and EN's 90th anniversary. It is listed as such in 'The Years Between - 1909-1969 Volume 1', however PSV Circle 2PF4 (a later and much more detailed book) disagrees, suggesting it was withdrawn by NOTC before the transfer. But either way it is still part of EN history and others of the same type did operate for ENOC.

Letters

Terry Challis from Thornton Cleveleys

Norfolk's Recalled

Firstly, this month, an extract from Terry's letter first published in EBN 674.

My only experience of Norfolk's was one evening in 1964 (I think) when I waited for a bus to go into town at Colchester North Station. The first bus to come along was a pre-war Leyland TD of Norfolk's of Nayland. I travelled the short distance to Colchester Town on it. I think it was an ex-Birmingham City Transport bus, but I could well be mistaken about that! I wonder whether anyone knows any more about it or has photos of it?

Apologies to Terry for the belated reply, caused by lack of space in recent issues. **Richard Delahoy** has provided the following.

It happens that we have a picture of one such bus in our Bob Campen collection. This shows ex-Birmingham FOF 296, a 1939 Leyland TD6, standing in the St John's Bus Park in Colchester on 29 August 1955, alongside an Eastern National Bristol LS bus, ready for the 5pm departure for Stoke-by-Nayland on the service that they ran jointly with Eastern National. Bob Campen and his friend Jimmy Bulbeck also took a rear view of it on a subsequent visit in 1961.

As mentioned in the January issue of EBN, Bob Campen has passed on to us a collection of black & white photos he and Jimmy took in the 1950s and early 1960s, which we are featuring every Tuesday on our Facebook page, with over 100 photos published so far. Indeed, the post of this photo was one of the most popular to date, with almost 3,000 views. This shot appeared on 7 January. Terry would also like our posts in June and early July as they looked at a holiday taken in Clacton in that same week at the end of August 1955. To view, just visit Facebook and search for us.

FOF 296 was acquired by Norfolk's in September 1954 from the Leytonstone based dealer / operator Lansdowne Luxury Coaches and lasted with Norfolk's until the end of 1962 before going for scrap. It was the only ex-Birmingham double-decker they ran at that time, so is almost certainly the bus that Terry rode on and would date his visit to a little earlier than 1964 as he had thought.

Interestingly, much later, Norfolk's also ran three more former Birmingham buses, Daimler Fleetlines of a different generation, SOE 913/41/78H.



Main photo previous page: courtesy of John Perthen, Essex & London Heritage Group (Hornchurch) with information from 'The Years Between - 1909-1969 Volume 1 The National Story to 1929' (by Crawley, MacGregor and Simpson).

In my caption to the Stagecoach Enviro 400 on rail replacement in Southend in EBN 678 page 25, I inadvertently mixed up my route brandings. The branding that Arriva Southend used for the batch of 12 mid-length Versas introduced on route 9 in 2011 was 'The Wave', not the 'Breeze' name that Stagecoach use today in the Ramsgate area. A silly slip, for which I apologise. Those Southend Versas transferred to Guildford when Southend received its Enviro 400s for route 1 and the long Versas on the 1 were cascaded onto the 9. That was four years ago now, but recently 4201 was noted in service in Guildford still carrying the 'Kursaal Flyer' name applied in Southend and confusing respected industry commentator Roger French, as well, no doubt, the residents of Guildford. Mind you, with the Kursaal closed and the original carnival float now a distant memory, as is the once popular 1970's beat combo the Kursaal Flyers (most famous for their 1976 hit single 'Little Does She Know' that I know that she knows), the name probably confused many Southend residents as well!

The original Kursaal Flyer float was built in 1951 or 1952 and was a full-sized replica of a late 19th Century American Transcontinental locomotive, which could drive on roads as underneath was a three-tonne Bedford lorry, the only bit of steam power was in its fairground organ. A short film taken on 3 September 1962 is available at www.britishpathe.com/video/kursaal-flyer. It was sadly destroyed by fire In May 1973 when vandals set its storage shed alight. There was a subsequent one built on a tractor that appeared in 1997 for 'Southend in Bloom' although that too was destroyed by fire. There was also a smaller 'Kursaal Cub' based on an Austin lorry.



Going back to the Versas, all 12 received names with local connections when on route 9, as we reported in our April 2012 magazine, so I wonder if the other names are still in place in deepest Surrey? Above right: 4201 on 25 February 2012 with its newly applied name. Below: sister 4209 passing the Kursaal on route 9 on 7 April 2012 showing its 'Ride the Wave' branding. Both photos **Richard Delahoy**.

Incidentally, I can strongly recommend Roger French's regular blogs published as BusAndTrainUser (<https://busandtrainuser.com/author/busandtrainuser/>), in which he casts a critical eye on developments in the bus and rail industries - they are well worth a read! His 25 September expose on Harlow is particularly hard-hitting.



When I worked for Eastern National in the 1960s, I lived within walking distance of the depot. One winter's evening a bus inspector called at my home and asked me if I would do an emergency rail job as the overhead power lines were down between Rayleigh and Southend. He told me that I would be paid from now until 5am as the last train was 2.30am, this was 11 hours overtime. I asked about my early shift the next day. The inspector said that he would get this covered, so I agreed to do the job and told him to wait while I put my uniform on. He said there was no time for that, "just grab a coat and come with me", so I went in his car to the depot and was given an FLF and told to go to Wickford Station where trains were terminating.

Wickford Station was packed with people, but the porter had it in full control and he asked, "how many passengers driver?", I replied "70 bums on seats and 10 standing". He counted passengers on and said, "that's it driver". I shut the doors and drove off. It was domino loads at all the stations until about midnight when we could take it easier. At 3am I left Southend and made my way down the A127 home, when, near Wickford, the bell rang twice. I thought I had woken a sleeping rail passenger, so I pulled into the next layby, put all the interior lights on and opened the passenger door, but no one got off, so I got out of the cab and went inside. No one was there, so I went upstairs but there was no one there either.

I suddenly went cold. Then I heard "Can I help you driver?". I looked in the conductor's mirror at the top of the stairs and saw a policeman at the doors. I said, "the bell rang twice but there was no one here". As I came down the stairs the policeman said, "where is your uniform, you have nicked this bus, you are under arrest". I replied "there is no time for uniforms in rail emergencies" but I was cuffed and put in the back of the police car. The policeman's colleague asked, "what's your name and what depot are you from?". I told him and added "not many people who have nicked a bus would know the depot phone number would they". He said the number could be false, but he radioed HQ with the info I had given him and after about 15 minutes I heard "all in order". I was uncuffed and he said, "I will let you off this time". I replied, "you have no other choice do you copper, how about sorry for the trouble I have caused you? I expect deep down you were sorry you were not able to drive the bus, well you would find it a lot harder than driving a police car".

Anyway, I didn't turn the interior lights off until I got back to the depot and I told the night shunter "that bus is haunted".



Above: Brentwood based 2784 (935 LWC) at the terminus of route 250 at Shotgate Post Office before starting its journey back to Brentwood. This route also served Wickford Station. Could this have been Doug's haunted bus? Photo taken between May 1966 when this version of route 250 commenced and May 1969 when 2784 transferred to Clacton. **EBEG Collection** thanks to **Chris Stewart**

Ted Miles from the Emerald Isle

Memories of Route X10 (1960s version)

I was a conductor on the X10 right from the off at Basildon depot. Here is what it was like on a Saturday duty in 1964. Operate service 151 from Basildon to Southend 7.46am, arrive Southend 8.46am. 9am Southend to London Victoria with vehicle 2602 (185 XN0). Arrived at Basildon full, a duplicate vehicle was standing by which operated to King's Cross, where any Victoria passengers he had were transferred to our coach now that we had room. Arrival due at 11.15am, but due to late running was 11.30am. Quick turnround and operated the 11.35am to Southend. More late running left the Bakers Arms 20 minutes down and passengers left behind due to it being a hot sunny day. At Basildon change over crew. This duty was always busy. My driver at this time was Bill Gale.

At this time two ticket machines were used, with two conductor boxes. Setright Speed machine number E1010 was my machine for the 151 and Setright machine number Z27 for the X10. George Digby was the man we reported to, he was the ex-West Bergholt operator who was very easy to get on with. We had regular meetings re the overloading problems trying to work out the duplication needed for the days ahead, a problem due to staff shortage. Another problem could be luggage and you had to aware where the luggage was for, always asking the passengers their destination, as this made life easier and kept things moving as best we could.

We had five crews for the X10 at Basildon, and we were handpicked, and care of the passenger was very important. Where has it all gone so badly wrong? Monday to Friday early morning departures had a lot of regular commuters and were mainly on the service as far as the Bakers Arms. Hope this gives readers an idea what it was like in the Sixties.

Additional Info

The first two FLF coaches (184/5 XN0) were delivered in February 1962 with the third (186 XN0) following the next month. They had chassis numbers 118.118, 118.120 and 118.119 and body numbers 12521, 12522, 12523 respectively. They were numbered in body number (and delivery date and registration number) order 1608, 1609 and 1610.

However, when the fleet was renumbered on 9 August 1964, they were numbered in chassis number order and so became 2600, 2602 and 2601 respectively. They originally had LD style radiator grilles and normal underlined fleet names, but they were modernised by April 1963 with the new moulded grille and moulded fleet name under the first window on the front nearside and under the staircase panel on the offside. They later lost their newer grilles for the original type, but we have no record of why this happened. Does anyone know? The differing styles are illustrated on the following two pages. In the early 1970s all were transferred to Tillings (NBC) Ltd as 9600, 9601 and 9602, before returning to EN, 2600/2 were also loaned to United Counties. All three were later downgraded to buses as 2932, 2933 and 2934 (in chassis no. order).

On the left is a leaflet for the X10 from the very summer Ted mentions. It features 186 XN0, which is included as a colour photo on the inside rear cover of this issue.

On the next page is a photo of 2602 leaving Basildon Bus Station, but a few years after the events recalled in Ted's letter. It is on service X8, which was a variant of the X10 route, introduced from 1968 for trips that ran via Rayleigh Weir and Southend Airport rather than Pitsea and the A13 and which had previously been numbered X1. The photo was taken between 1968 and before October 1970, as by the latter date the X10 group of routes were single-decker worked (although not between June 1968 & April 1969 as 2602 was allocated to Hadleigh between those dates).

In November 1970, 2602 had the two rear single seats downstairs removed to provide extra luggage space for operation on coach-air express service. The X8 ceased when the X10 group was converted to limited-stop operation as the 400 group in April 1971.

EASTERN NATIONAL
Express Coach Service **X10**

SOUTHEND
Westcliff
Leigh
Hadleigh
South Benfleet
Pitsea
Vange
BASILDON
Gidea Park
Romford
Newbury Park
Snaresbrook
Leyton
Dalston
Islington
LONDON

TIMES & FARES
1964 from 26th MARCH until further notice
Also giving details of X1 operating from 15th May to 4th October

ALL TICKETS ISSUED ON THE COACHES
NOTE: Whilst all tickets are available on the coaches for service X10, SEATS MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE FOR X1



From the COLOUR Archives

by Richard Delahoy

As mentioned last month, we are replacing the long-running 'Blast from the Past' feature and instead are reserving one of our precious colour slots each month to showcase a colour photo from our archives, looking back to the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. And yes, we do have some colour shots from the 1950s, albeit not very many! We will try wherever possible to link the photo to a historical article or letter in the same issue.

So, to start us off, here (right) is a very evocative shot of one of Eastern National's fabulous Bristol FLF coaches on the X10 service as described by Ted Miles in his letter on the previous page. The date of the photo was not recorded, but the coach has received a stylised fleet name (in place of the standard bus style transfers) and an updated Lodekka grille to give it a more modern appearance, yet still carries its original fleet number, 1610 (it was to become 2601 in the August 1964 renumbering). The rear of what appears to be an East Kent coach narrows the range down to the start of the Dartford Tunnel Coachways joint operations, so the picture probably dates to May-early August 1964, the summer of Ted's letter.

The location is Basildon Bus Station, in its original form with two long drive through lanes - it would be summer 1966 before it was rebuilt to the now familiar sawtooth style. Ted describes his work as the conductor and we can just glimpse someone standing at the top of the stairs in a white coat - was that perhaps the conductor in summer coach uniform, checking how many seats were spare?

A final piece of trivia. The fleet number and depot plates have cream lettering on green, whereas most other pre-August 1964 pictures of these vehicles have those colours reversed. Note also the white on green blinds.

Photo by **Howard Butler**. Above photo: 2602, see details on previous page, **Terry Coughlin** from **Chris Stewart's** collection.

Photo Captions

Inside Rear Cover Bottom: As reported in EBNs 677 & 678, Heddingham have recently acquired three Volvo B7TL Plaxton Presidents. 587 is seen at East Mersea on 15 October, still in East Yorkshire livery but with Heddingham fleet names. **John Podgorski**

Rear Cover: October 2020 was very wet! **Top:** As reported in EBN 678, 66971 is on loan to First Essex at Colchester from First West Yorkshire. In Urban 2 livery with a pink front, it is seen at East Road, West Mersea on the morning of 2nd having just passed Flagfinders Volvo / President LK03 NHV on the West Mersea to Thurstable School, Tiptree contract. **John Podgorski**

Bottom: Further to the photos in EBNs 676 & 677, 37007 has since had adverts applied. The background colour for this advert for 'Subway' blends in well with the livery. Still raining on 21st, service 75 at the Fullbridge, Maldon. **Dave Arnold**





ESSEX BUS NEWS

Issue 679

November 2020

Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964