

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 705 January 2023



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



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Let it Snow

It snowed in Essex on the evening of Sunday 11 December 2022 and the freezing conditions meant that it stayed on the ground until rain washed it away the following Sunday.

Front Cover: Stephenson's Solo 328 (YJ58 PHN) on NIBS Buses route 374 on the next day, 12 December. First Essex Enviro 400 33415 (WA56 FTN) is in the background on route 100. At the Basildon Hospital roundabout.

Above: Pride liveried First Essex Enviro 400 33425 (SN59 AWW) also on route 100 at the Basildon Hospital roundabout on the same day. Both **Nick Street**.

But the conditions were nowhere near as bad as they had been at the turn of the year 1978/79.

Inside Front Cover: Bright sunshine and snow can make for some great photographic opportunities.

On New Year's Day 1979 (when buses still ran locally on that day), the combination provided this setting for Southend Transport Daimler Fleetline 364 (WJN 364J) loading in Central Bus Station (**bottom**). The lighting conditions were great for buses facing south but much less so in the shadows of Southchurch Road where Eastern National Leyland National 1770 (MAR 792P) takes on passengers on the same day (**top**). Like the Fleetline, it is heading for Shoeburyness, The Sportsman (now known as the Renown, although the pub of that name was demolished long ago), in this case terminating there as the roads onwards to the East Beach terminus of the 3 were impassable.

Eastern National had suspended their services locally on the afternoon of 31 December because of heavy snow and only a limited service was running on the following day when these shots were taken. Both **Richard Delahoy**.

There are some more snow photos inside this issue.

50 years of Eastern National Leyland Nationals are celebrated starting on page 27.

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Subscriptions

A calendar year subscription is £26. New members
may join from any month, but subscriptions will always
run to December from whichever month the member
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£2.30 per month. For example, a member joining in
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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 706

Reports to Sub-Editors	28 January
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	3 February
Dispatch by Printers on or before	13 February

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.

Views expressed in EBM do not necessarily reflect the
opinions of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group or
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Printed by

Directcds Ltd, Unit 2, Gentlemans Field, Westmill Road, Ware,
Hertfordshire SG12 0EF
01920 465023

www.directcds.co.uk

Group Notices

Improving EBM

Reading this issue, you will notice one important change following the recent readership survey. A number of members commented on the difficulty in reading EBM's typeface. We consulted a selection of members and have tested a variety of ideas to improve the readability. Our initial thoughts were simply to increase the print size but thanks in large part to the contribution from a former editor, David Harman, we realised that wasn't the answer. Without getting too technical, what we have done is to switch away from a condensed font (which squashed the characters up too much), allied to a wider line spacing and not justifying the text to the right margin. Taken together, we think these will make a significant improvement in the ease of reading EBM, without materially reducing the total content. Inevitably there is a trade-off between the size of the typeface and the amount of material we can fit into our fixed page size and total, we think we've achieved an optimal balance.

We hope you will agree that this issue achieves the objective of making EBM easier to read, but if not, do please tell us - it's your magazine! We've also taken account of your comments about the balance of content and that should become evident from now on, although of course we can't always satisfy everyone's interests and sometimes contradictory views.

Membership News

Welcome to the following new members:

Daniel Pretty, Colchester - 1205

Nick Agnew, Epping - 1206

Ray Overs, Holbeach - 1207

Steve Thompson, Thundersley - 1208.

The Running Card by Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Saturday 4 February: Transport Collectors Fair, Allum Manor House, Allum Lane, Elstree WD6 3PJ.

Saturday 11 February: Enfield Transport Bazaar, St Stephens Church Hall, Village Road, Enfield EN1 3PJ.

Sunday 19 February (Following First Bus's decision to close its bus depot in Southampton and withdraw all of its City Red services in the area with effect from this date): Farewell to Southampton Red Buses. Heritage Buses on 3 routes to Shirley, Woolston & Portswood from Pound Tree Road, City Centre from 1100 to 1600.

Saturday 25 March: London heritage buses on routes 174/5 (Dagenham - Harold Hill / North Romford, Chase Cross).

Saturday 1 April: South East Bus Festival, Kent Showground, Detling.

Sunday 16 April: Spring Gathering, London Bus Museum, Brooklands KT13 OQN

Monday 8 May: Eastern National Heritage Running Day. Museum of Power, Langford, Maldon CM9 6QA.

Events are published in good faith. However, the Group cannot be responsible for any changes due to future circumstances. Please check before travelling.

Southend Corporation Transport - 1960s Notices

We have a few sets of duplicated foolscap sheets for SCT covering instructions for diversions for Southend Carnival and other marches, Hockley railway bridge works, fares on OMO buses (1970), instructions / connections re the first year of special Boxing Day services (1971), timetables for emergency services on various dates during the 1967 strike, and a couple of other strike day timetables. Free to members, please contact Richard Delahoy by the end of January (details on page 2) if interested.

Postal Delays

Once again apologies for the late arrival of EBM 704 (we know of a couple of members who didn't receive their copy until New Year's Eve!) and the continuing delays caused by postal strikes which are out of our control. At the time of writing no more strikes were planned (although the dispute is not settled and so there may well be future industrial action) and hopefully members will receive this issue on time.

Follow Ups to EBM 704

Further to the photo and accompanying caption of ex-London Country AN264 in Brentwood High Street on the Ensignbus Heritage Running Day in last month's issue, here is a photo that shows that London Country Atlanteans have indeed worked in Brentwood in the past, although their use there is thought to have been very unusual.

A photo of a hired Southend Transport Leyland PD3 on route



339 (Harlow-Warley Fords) was included in EBM 694 (February 2022). The PD3s were replaced from February 1977 by Routemaster RMLs. However, these only lasted until July that year when the route was converted to OMO, thereafter worked mainly by SNB/Cs (Leyland Nationals) and RPs (AEC Reliances / Park Royal). The above photo by **John Fryer** was taken in June 1977 (so during the period of RML operation). It is of AN3 (JPL 103K) which has an ultimate blind showing half of both destinations, with the vias turned to blank, and was taken just a few yards down the road from last month's photo. A ticket machine is visible. This is quite possibly a Sunday OMO working. The bus is still in pre-NBC London Country livery (but with an NBC advert on the side). **Chris Stewart** has asked several local enthusiasts (including the editor) and no one can recall seeing ANs on the 339.

Chris's article on Atlanteans in Essex, which mentioned AN1-3 being delivered new to Harlow, was in EBN 586 (February 2013). Thanks to him for the above information.

Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit writes:

I was delighted to see the photo of 2902 (VW 9565) in EBM 704. The lack of pedestrians, and the drawn blinds and shutters on the shops, indicate that it was taken on a Sunday. The destination on 2902 is set to "BROOMFIELD HOSP. RELIEF". Obviously the direction of the bus, turning into Fairfield Road, shows that it is returning from the hospital. Broomfield Hospital was built in the early 1950s as a sanatorium, specifically for the treatment of Tuberculosis (TB), a disease prevalent in the smoke filled slums of East London. On Sundays there would be a convoy of buses on service 10 (later 30) making their way from Bow to Broomfield for visitors, often as many as a dozen. There would be two hours allowed for visiting, and, with very little parking available, the crews would return to the depot, before being dispatched back to pick up the passengers. Presumably that is what is happening here. It was quite common for my dad to disappear on a Sunday morning, if he wasn't already working, to work a 'Hospital Special'. During that two hour layover, he would leap on his bike to pedal home for lunch, or if he had his regular conductor, Wally Bye, who lived near us, the double-decker would be parked outside our house. They had to go back to the depot before returning to the hospital, as the Duty Inspector would allocate each bus to a destination. The conductors would have given him details of the passengers from each stage on the outward journey. Some would go to Bow, some Stratford, Ilford or Romford, the latter meeting up with the ex-City service to Tottenham and Wood Green. The last was a mixed blessing for the crews. They would be home a little earlier, but would be paid less. As a rest day working the company only paid the hours worked. (Continued next page)

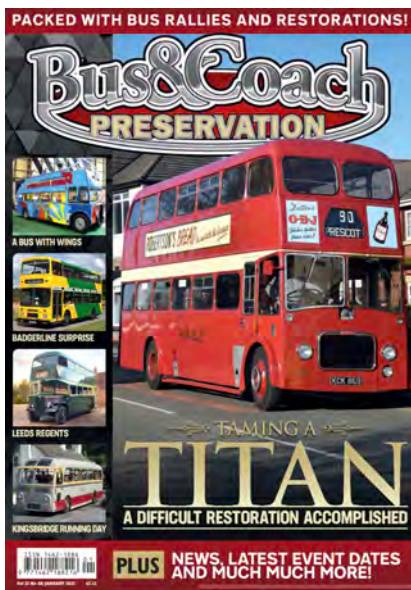
(Continued from previous page)

There were also buses on Wednesdays (early closing day), but never the volume of passengers that were about on Sundays. With smokeless coal, and the Clean Air Act, TB became less and less, but a through bus from Bow to Broomfield on service 30, and later from Wood Green on the 351, continued on Sundays until the early 1970s.

Robert Downton advises that there is an article about the restoration on WNO 481, the 'Wings' KSW, in January 2023's edition of 'Bus & Coach Preservation'. N.B. This is not the issue currently in shops so would need to be ordered, an electronic version is also available.

Correction to the caption for the rear cover photos in EBM 704 from **Kevin Smith**: it was not the first time that ex JMT Leyland Titan 6332 J had carried passengers since its restoration, it also did so at the 2018 Ensignbus Heritage Running Day.

Doug Brown notes that the sloping windscreen on this vehicle was to prevent interior saloon lights in the lower deck reflecting in the driver's vision, long before blackout screens.



The £2 Bus Fare Cap

by Richard Delahoy

A scheme was announced by the then Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps in September to cap adult single bus fares at £2, for the three months January to March 2023.

Participation is voluntary and an opaque and complicated four-stage formula has been established to reimburse participating operators for the loss of revenue, but with a deduction for 'generated' traffic (i.e., more people expected to be travelling than would otherwise have been the case). Operators had to supply a large amount of baseline data from 2019 about revenue / passenger numbers and after that had been assessed, were given only four days to decide whether to take part, after being told how much they would get from the overall £60m pot for the whole of England. School services are excluded from the scheme (despite many having single fares well over £2) but otherwise, if an operator takes part, generally all their services must be included. There is no exclusion for premium fare routes. Two airport services which are included are First Essex's X30 from Southend to Stansted Airport, where the maximum single fare is currently £17, and Arriva's 724 from Harlow to Heathrow Airport which has a running time of over three hours. Areas which have introduced fare caps already, such as Greater Manchester, Liverpool City and West Yorkshire, using other funding sources, are also excluded from the scheme, as is London (where the single flat fare is less than £2). Cornwall already has a £2.50 cap but has come into line with the scheme.



The principle behind the scheme is very good, offering help to cash-strapped households and encouraging greater bus use, but it has potential pitfalls, not least the impact on pricing and sales of weekly and other period tickets, and daily and weekly fare capping, plus requiring a lot of admin time from hard pressed staff. Providing the baseline data was complicated (or impossible) where routes had changed operators since 2019 and where operators had changed ticket machine suppliers and no longer had access to legacy data systems. The cap also had the potential to seriously impact on concessionary fare reimbursement, since the average adult single fare is a major factor in setting the level of reimbursement, but DfT recognised that and have encouraged Local Transport Authorities to continue to pay on the basis of historic average fares.

For those tendered services where the revenue passes to the County Council, a particularly difficult rule says that revenue should continue to be paid over based on the pre-cap fare scale, as for example with the recently tendered Uttlesford network. That will create significant administration problems, as well as exposing the operator to revenue risk - another flaw in this scheme's 69 terms & conditions.

As far as we know, the following operators in Essex are participating:

Arriva, First Essex, Central Connect, Hedingham & Chambers, Ipswich Buses, NIBS, Stephensons, Stagecoach.

Those NOT taking part include:

Ensignbus, Panther Travel, Vectare (except for routes 13, 14, 22 & 418), Arrow Taxis / Essex Dart and most community transport operators.

Occasional shopper type services such as Fords Coaches 3 & 6 and Lodge Coaches 17/18 are also excluded.

Expecting a lot of generated new traffic in the coldest months of the year and in the post-Christmas lull seems optimistic and there is a danger that this scheme will prove to be no more than a short-term gimmick, in the absence of any long-term Government funding.

Of course, operators might decide to continue with the cap after March at their own commercial risk, but that seems unlikely given current passenger numbers and cost inflation. Even if additional traffic is generated, will it be large enough and sustainable to replace the lost revenue on fares over £2 and make the scheme self-financing? Somehow I doubt it. So will we see a backlash in April when the scheme ends and fares go back up to their previous levels, or even higher? Of course, any backlash will be directed at the bus companies, not at the government that put them in that position in the first place!



6 December 2022

HTD1 (Sch only) North Weald, the Talbot - Sawbridgeworth, Leventhorpe School **Hedge The Distance**. Revised route and timetable. N.B. Many readers may not have heard of 'Hedge The Distance'. This operator is a Harlow based minibus company that obtained an operator's licence in 2019, now authorised for two discs. More information is available at www.hedgethedistance.co.uk.

21 December

42A (further to EBM 704) Chelmsford Bus Station - Bishops Stortford Interchange **First Essex**. Registration amended to stopping arrangement at Bishop's Stortford Interchange.

23 December

Stephensons services 313/314/414/453 reverted to normal route, following the delayed completion of roadworks on the B184, North of Thaxted at Armitage Bridge. (Minor works continued into the New Year under temporary traffic signals.)

Stephensons services 637 (South Woodham Ferrers, Asda - Chelmsford, County High School) and 673 (Wickham Bishops, Snows Corner - Chelmsford, St John Payne School) registrations formally cancelled, although neither had operated since December 2021.

1 January 2023

6/A/B (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Point Clear **Hedingham**. Further to last month, the revised timetable, includes a reduction in frequency.

74 (M-S) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Colchester, Head Street **Hedingham**. Revised timetable, with the 1733 service from Clacton withdrawn.

88 (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Great Yeldham, The Green **Hedingham**. Further to last month, the revised timetable includes a reduction in frequency, with fewer journeys extended to & from Great Yeldham.

89 (M-S) Great Yeldham, The Green - Braintree Station **Hedingham**. Further to last month, the revised timetable includes a reduction in frequency, with the formal removal of some services that haven't operated for some while due to driver shortages.

136 (M-S) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Clacton Shopping Village **Hedingham**. Further to last month, the revised timetable includes a reduction in frequency.

137 (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Clacton Shopping Village **Hedingham**. Further to last month, the revised timetable includes a reduction in frequency.

X76 (M-S) Colchester, Head Street - Jaywick, Millers Barn **Hedingham**. Further to last month, the revised timetable includes a reduction in frequency.

The changes above appear to reflect formal registration of pre-existing timetables that have been in place for some while as a result of driver shortages.

3 January

3 (M-S) Chelmsford Bus Station - Southend Travel Centre **First Essex**. Revised route and timetable. Rerouted to serve Blenheim Chase and Southend Hospital and all journeys now serve Sandon, Daws Heath and Leigh. Services via Swayne Park School also now serve Wolsey Park. Slight reduction in services operating via RHS Hyde Hall. (Additional information to last month.)

5 January

503 (Sch only) Althorne, Post Office - South Woodham Ferrers, Old Wickford Road **Stephensons**. Revised timetable, to provide connection with 504 in South Woodham Ferrers (see below).

504 (Sch only) Wickham Bishops, Snows Corner - Southchurch, Girls High School **Stephensons**. Revised timetable due to traffic congestion in Southend.

7 January

40 (M,W,S only) Witham, Gershwyn Boulevard - Witham, Ebenezer Close **First Essex**. Further to last month, this service no longer serves Gershwyn Boulevard on Saturdays.

9 January

593 (Sch only) Althorne, Post Office - South Woodham Ferrers, Asda **Stephensons**. Registration cancelled, although this service has not operated since Covid restrictions were introduced.

10 January

TCT1 (M-F) Tending area - Colchester Hospitals **Tending Community Transport** flexible service. Some journeys withdrawn.

12 February

621 (Sch only) Great Totham, Captains Wood Road - Chelmsford Schools **Stephensons**. Service withdrawn.

701 (Sch only) Brightlingsea, Victoria Place - Colchester, Norman Way **Stephensons**. Service withdrawn.

In announcing the cessation of these two services the company posted the following notice on-line, reflecting the unprecedented challenges the industry continues to face:

"As you may be aware, like many sectors of industry and particularly transport, we are facing horrendous staff shortages at present. This is caused by drivers re-appraising their lifestyle choices post Covid, Brexit, staff moving to better paid jobs in haulage / delivery / other sectors, and some simply wanting to move to more 9-5 type roles. And, of course on top of that we have sickness absence, overlaid on the usual winter ailments.

"We have managed to protect peak-time school services from unscheduled cancellations on a daily basis, although many of our local bus services have suffered. The situation is currently getting worse rather than better, and although we have new recruits in our training school, it takes around three months for a non-bus licence holder to go through all the stages to acquire a provisional licence, go through the various theory tests, and then training with our instructors leading up to the final practical driving test. We envisage it could be many months before we reach a position of more normal staffing levels.

"As a consequence, we are having to withdraw two of our peak-time school services from 10th February 2022. We have picked the two services with the lowest passenger numbers, and where we believe many of the students will have alternative routes. I should say we have spoken to other operators to see if they could temporarily provide cover, but they can't.

"Service 621 passengers will have the option of using service 70, operated by First Essex, and 701 passengers will have the option of using service 87, also operated by First Essex.

"I am extremely sorry that we have been forced to do this, and at relatively short notice. However, the staffing situation is worse than I have ever known in my nearly 40 years in the bus industry, and I fear that if we don't take this decisive action, we will soon be at a point where there will be random daily cancellations of services to schools, and we end up leaving students by the roadside. By taking this action, we will hopefully avoid that, allow parents to plan alternatives, and affect the minimum number of pupils.

"The last day of service for the 621 and the 701 will be Friday 10th February 2023. Any students that hold an annual pass, will of course be refunded for the unused portion. Once again, please accept my sincere apologies for the cancellation of these services".

Common Registration Dates

The following announcement was made by Essex County Council in December:

"As part of the Enhanced Partnership between Essex County Council and local bus operators, a set of Common Registration Dates has been agreed each year for new registrations, variations and cancellations. These change dates align with the ECC Academic Calendar (start and end of each school term / half term) and will allow better co-ordination when updating roadside printed publicity. It will also limit the number of times a particular bus corridor can change in quick succession.

"The agreed change dates for 2023 are (all Sundays):

1 January, 19 February, 16 April, 4 June, 23 July, 3 September, 29 October.

(Change dates are permitted in the full week after the Sunday, to allow for special day services to commence e.g. 'Tuesdays only')."

This is welcome news and will end the current situation where timetables are revised on an almost ad-hoc basis. It will hopefully add some stability and avoid the confusion that passengers face, with future changes confined to specific dates.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy, Adam Kelleher and Essex County Council.

Acquired Vehicles

Further to EBM 701, the revised seating capacity of the ex-Arriva London Enviro 400s 34451-65 after they were converted to single door is H41/31F, including the addition of three tip up seats in the wheelchair area. They were new as H41/26D.

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 9 2022/23 (20 November - 24 December)

32530 CR (oos)-CR, 32539 CR (oos)-Disposal, 33191 HH (oos)-Disposal, 33384 BN (oos)-Disposal, 33546 BN-BN (oos), 33825 HH-BN, 34459 HH (oos)-HH, 36218 HH (oos)-HH, 36843 CF (oos)-CF, 37138 CR-CR (oos), 42936 CF-CF (oos), 42937 CF-CF (oos), 42940 CF-CF (oos), 42956 CF-CF (oos), 47421 FG-CR, 47427 FG-CR, 47430 FG-CR, 66759 CR-CF, 66800 CR (oos)-Disposal, 66801 CR-CR (oos), 66816 CR (oos)-Disposal, 66821 CR (oos)-Disposal, 66970 CR-CR (oos), 66971 CR (oos)-Disposal, 67168 BN (oos)-BN, 67737 CF (oos)-CF, 69516 HH-CR, 69517 HH-CR

All President and ALX 400 bodied Tridents have now been disposed of.

There are now no longer any Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urbans allocated to Colchester for service, all remaining vehicles of this type still in use (05/55/58 reg) are at Chelmsford. However, with the above transfers of 69516 and 69517, Colchester now has three of the later examples with Eclipse Urban 2 bodies (11 reg), with the other three still at Hadleigh.

Disposals

32539, 33384, 66800, 66816, 66971 as in EBM 704.

33191 driven away from Hadleigh Depot for preservation with the Blackwater Preservation Group on 15 December 2022.

66821 to Ensignbus December 2022.

Refurbished Vehicle

Further to EBM 698, Volvo 7900 Hybrid 69905 returned from Thorntons, where it had been for refurbishment since 31 May 2022, on 8 December. The exterior side panelling has been completely remodelled, instead of long panels, it is now in sections so that a small bit of panel damage can easily be replaced rather than the whole side piece needing to be repanelled. It has been repainted into red shuttles livery. Inside, wood effect flooring has been added, chrome hand rails have replaced pink, and red / black moquette seats (as in 44171-8) have replaced e-leather. Grey interior sides / wheel arches have been replaced by maroon, with white around and above the windows. As of 8 January 2023 it had yet to re-enter service.

Other Repaints

Recently acquired StreetLites 47421, 47427 and 47430 from red... to red. Not quite the same livery, from Southampton City Reds to red shuttles.

47421 returned to Colchester from repaint at Mardens on 9 December and 47427 took its place there. In turn, when 47427 returned, 47430 went for repaint. 47421 entered service on 14 December, 47427 re-entered service on



17th, 47430 re-entered service on 23rd. 47427 had been used in City Reds livery for the first five days of December, 47430 had been used in that livery from the end of November (see EBM 704) until 16 December, 47421 was not used before repaint.

Bottom of previous page: 47421 (SK63 KMI) at Colchester Bus Station on route S4 on 22 December 2022.

Derek Stebbing

We do not have any photos of 47427 or 47430 in service with First Essex before they were repainted, if anyone does please E Mail a copy to the editor (address on page 2).

33552 from Urban to Essex Bus green, arrived back at Basildon Depot on 20 December 2022.

37613 from all over purple to Essex Bus green (the first Gemini in new livery), seen back at Quayside Depot, Colchester on 6 January 2023.

Super Rear Adverts

Further to EBM 703 and the photo in EBM 704, StreetLite 47655 and Enviro 200 MMC 67168 at Basildon are others to gain a super rear advert for driver recruitment. 47655 has the same photo and same "Captains Wanted" strapline as 67902, 67168 has the strapline "Legends Wanted".

Christmas & New Year Services

Christmas Eve, Saturday 24 December 2022: normal Saturday service, except X30 to a reduced timetable in the evening, with the last bus from Stansted to Southend at 2300. Also, on Z3 & Z4 no afternoon buses towards Tilbury and the afternoon buses from Amazon Tilbury departed at 1615 on both routes.

Christmas Day, Sunday 25th: No service.

Boxing Day, Monday 26th: X10 plus special timetables on C1 & C2 (between Chelmsford Bus Station & Broomfield Hospital only), 100, 300, X30, Z3 & Z4; no other services.

Tuesday 27th: Sunday service.

Wednesday 28th / Thursday 29th / Friday 30th: Generally a Saturday service, but with ECC contract services running on their normal days of operation. Additional early morning and evening journeys on 13/A and 14 and some other services had late evening and last journeys operating to normal days of operation. Last 21 from Canvey (to Southend) as per normal weekdays at 2120 (i.e., the additional Saturdays only 2220 from Canvey to Hadleigh did not run on these three days).

New Year's Eve, Saturday 31st: Normal Saturday service, except Z3 & Z4 as on Christmas Eve.

New Year's Day, Sunday 1 January 2023: No service except X10 & X30 and special timetable (same as Boxing Day) on C1 & C2.

Monday 2nd: Sunday service, except on routes Z3 & Z4 no morning buses from Amazon Tilbury.

Tuesday 3rd: Normal services resumed.

Around the Depots

(All vehicles listed below allocated to relevant depot except where stated. All dates December 2022 except where stated.)

Colchester

Volvo B7TL / Transbus ALX400 32087's last day in service was Christmas Eve. It was supposed to work a full day on route S1, but suffered a defect and was replaced by sister 32068. A photo of 32087 is on page 13.

In the scrap line on 8 December were 32260, 32530, 47697 (still awaiting entry into service but with some parts removed), 66800, 66804, 66821 and 66970. On 23rd all were still there except 32530 which had returned to service on 14th, 66821 which had gone to Ensignbus (see Disposals above) and 66970 (whereabouts unknown). They had been joined by 66801 and 66816.

News of the Harwich routes (1 December - 4 January). The demise of the 05 reg Volvo B7RLEs at Colchester is noted above, 66759 was last seen in Harwich on 13th, before transfer to CF and (further to EBM 704), 66801 reached Harwich for the last time on 9th prior to its withdrawal. 69515/6/7 (the latter two Period 9 transfers from HH) and the nine ADL Enviro 300 on the CR allocation worked the majority of journeys in this period. Various StreetLites have also been used, including the three recently acquired examples, 47427 (2 & 4 December), 47430 (8th & 9th) and 47421 (21st). The only double-deckers to reach Harwich have been 32532 (unusual on Sunday 4 December), 32629 (6th), 37016 (19th), 37062 (22nd), 37140 (23rd) and 37007 (2 January).

Clacton routes. 74B continues to be mainly worked by Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Geminis. Exceptions reported were: 37134 (13th), 37140 (29th), purple 37613 (12th), 47657 (22nd), 63329 (6 January), 63338 (19th), 63343 (20th), 67741 (8th) and 69516 (4 January).

76: 37037 (11th), 37015 (18th), 37010 & 47430 (Tuesday 27th), 32676 & 47658 (Monday 2 January), 67779 (8 January).

47421 (29th) & 47650 (28th) on 370. 32547 on 82 (20th). 67738 an unusual Enviro 300 on 11 (7th).

Chelmsford

Further to EBM 703, most weekday journeys on route 3 continued to be operated by Hadleigh depot (with Chelmsford still working Saturday ones) up until and including the Friday before Christmas (23 December). Saturday schedules in the following week meant all journeys were worked from CF, and then in the New Year weekday services returned to all CF working.

Four more Darts were taken out of service during Period 9, leaving only five, 42930, 42934, 42935, 42941 and 42944, still in use.

Darts are not usually used on Sundays, maybe one every now and then, but on 11 December six out of the seven remaining in service at the time were in use (the above five plus 42937, 42956 was the one not used), possibly considered more reliable (or perhaps more expendable!) than other buses during the cold snap. Then the following Sunday (18th) 42935 and 42956 were in service.

In the scrap line on 5 December were 42936, 42940, 42945, 69532 and 69533. 42936/40 were recent additions having been taken out of service following MOT expiration.

On 16 December, 44471 broke down leaving Colchester Bus Station on the 1915 Colchester to Chelmsford service. Passengers transferred to CR63343 which left 48 minutes late.

42944 on 3 (17th). Red 44175 and 44178 both in Brentwood on 23rd, the former on 37, the latter on 565. 44543 & 44546 on first day of new Witham local route 39 (7 January). 44914 on 371 (12th). 66796 (19th), 66817 (11th) and 67197 (5 January) on X30. 44003 (20th), 44469 (16th), 44543 (6th), 44662 (12th), 66759 (3 January), 66796 (5 January), 66797 (15th), 66811 (7th), 66813 (12th) on X30 shorts. 67737 on C7 & C57 (6 January).

Basildon

All stands in Basildon Bus Station reopened on Monday 12 December 2022 after the completion of the refurbishment works. We posted a list of which routes now serve which stands on our Facebook page on 5 January. 33553 has been withdrawn from service after suffering fire damage deemed beyond economic repair.

Some StreetLites have recently been on loan from Hadleigh to Basildon, 47522 (12-15 December), 47526 (10th), 47528 (13th-21st), 47643 (16th-29th) and 47652 (2nd). They worked on various BN routes, including 300 to Chelmsford. Amongst the more unusual workings were 47522 on 100 (12th) and 9 the next day, 47528 on X10 (19th) and school route 625 the next day, 47643 on 552 (19th) and 200 the next day, and 47652 on 9 (as well as 300) on 2nd.

Enviro 400 34462 was also on loan from HH to BN, from 19 to 24 December, it worked on 9, 25 and 100.

On Boxing Day Hadleigh depot was closed, so Amazon routes Z3 and Z4 were worked by Basildon, using Enviro 200 MMCs 67168, 67189, 67190, 67191 and 67193.

Other single-deckers on route 9: 44915 (20th & 24th), 47653 (5 January), 67902 (12th), 69902 (19th).

33574, 33986 & 47653 on 251 on Tuesday 27th. 44909 on 300 (13th - see photo on page 14), on 100 (4 January). 44910 on 100 (9th), on 300 (12th). 67165 on 251 (18th). 67189 on 552 (30th). 67161 (5 January), 67192 (19th), 67902 (15th), 69914 (9th & 14th) on school route 625. 69911 (24th) & 69919 (29th) on 16.

Hadleigh

Double-deckers are not usually used on Sundays at this depot, except on the Z3/4 Amazon routes, but 37985 was on route 21 all day on 11 December, operating through fog and later snow.

44927 unusual on 22 & 28 (6th) and 27 (4 January).

The Worst Delays Ever?

A burst water main closed the A13 eastbound from Sadlers Farm roundabout to Tarpots Corner in Benfleet on Monday 19 December 2022 and led to the almost total collapse of services 22 & 28 as congestion worsened dramatically as the day progressed. Southend and Canvey bound buses were diverted via the A130 Canvey Way, then to Benfleet Station and onwards. Delays were manageable until early afternoon but then escalated dramatically. We tracked a number of buses and found some extreme cases. The 1615 from Basildon to Canvey, worked by 69519, left Basildon bus station just seven minutes late but was a staggering 197 minutes late on arrival at Canvey Leigh Beck! The 1.8 miles from Pitsea Broadway along London Road to Sadlers Farm roundabout are allowed 10 minutes but it took this bus 3 hours, 1 minute. Even more extreme was the experience of 63166 on the 1705 ex

Basildon, which left there at about 1725, so 20 minutes late. By Pitsea it was running 86 minutes behind, extending to 251 mins late by Pound Lane, before the Sadlers Farm roundabout. It finally terminated short at Benfleet station at 2223, some 279 minutes late. Arrival back empty at Hadleigh depot was 2230, just over five hours after leaving Basildon. Thankfully the road reopened before the start of service the following morning, but we cannot recall such delays ever on an urban route.

Corrections

EBM 693: Under the heading "First Essex Fleet & Allocation Summary January 2022" it was stated that "This information is up to date to the end of Period 9 2020/21 (25 December 2021)". This should have been 2021/22.

EBM 703: It was stated that "once again 32269 is the only Barbie liveried vehicle in use". Two digits were transposed, this should have been 32629.

EBM 704: It was reported that 63344 has received a super rear advert for Colchester Institute. It has actually had this since at least September 2021, as reported in EBM 690.

Right: Advice from First Essex for those hailing a bus in the dark, especially in poorly lit areas.



With thanks to Robert Appleton, Stephen Barham, Jon Collins, Richard Delahoy, David Edwards, John Lidstone, William Morrison, Gareth Norris, John Podgorski, Ian Ransom, Derek Stebbing, Robert West, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

Below: Snow on the roof of Chelmsford Railway Station on 14 December 2022. 67162 (YY66 OZX) on route C1, its luggage racks from its time on airport service clearly visible at the front offside. **David Moth**



First Essex News in Pictures

Not quite Happy 21st Birthday! Volvo B7TL / Transbus ALX 400 32087 (KP51 WBZ) was new to Leicester Citybus in January 2002. It was acquired by First Essex from First Leicester in May 2015. It is seen leaving Colchester Bus Station on 1 December 2022 but it was withdrawn from service on Christmas Eve.

Alan Moore



We recorded the acquisition of two Enviro 400s from First South Yorkshire and Midlands in EBM 703. 33825 has been illustrated in the last two issues, but here is the other one, 33713 (SN12 AJU), on route 100 at Lakeside Bus Station on 3 December 2022. 33713 is another bus that was purchased for transport for the 2012 Olympic Games that has ended up in Essex.

Paul Harvey



On the same day, on the same route and at the same location is Enviro 200 MMC 67165 (YY66 PBO). Use of this batch of buses (originally purchased in November 2016 for airport services X10 & X30) on route 100 is rare, but on 3 December two were on the route, the other one being 67166 (YY66 PBU), also in Essex Buses green livery. This was the day of the Ensignbus Heritage Running Day, as illustrated last month, the bus behind is RT3232.

Paul Harvey



The number of the once numerous 05-registered Volvo B7RLE / Eclipse Urbans in the fleet continues to reduce and none are now in service from Colchester depot.

Urban 2 liveried 66970 (KX05 MJV) is seen in Colchester Bus Station on 2 November 2021. It lasted a further year and month in use, being withdrawn after service on 2 December 2022.

Robert Appleton



66813 (MX05 CDO) currently remains in service. It is seen at Braintree Bus Interchange on route 70 on 9 December 2022.

David Moth



The usual allocation to route 300 is Enviro 200 MMCs and hybrids. Mini Enviro 200 44909 was making an unusual appearance on the route on 13 December 2022. At Chelmsford Bus Station.

Derek Stebbing



More First Essex Buses in the Snow

Enviro 200 44081 (YX58 HVL) on route 37 turning from Brentwood High Street into King's Road on 12 December 2022.

Chris Stewart



ADL Dart / Pointer 42937 (SN05 DZT) on route C3 in St Nazaire Road in Melbourne, Chelmsford on 16 December 2022.

David Moth



30 Years Ago

Eastern National Bristol VR / ECW 3084 (STW 28W) on route 41 A or B at Galleywood on 5 January 1993. It has new (Badgerline style) vinyl fleet numbers but still retains its CF (Chelmsford) depot plates.

David Moth



Significant Allocations

264	CN - KN	by 19 November and still at end of December 2022
265	CN - KN	by 19 November and still at end of December 2022
287	CN - KN	by 14 December
292	KN - CN	by 14 December (then to HD by 19 December)
294	VOR KN	by 28 December (been off road 18 weeks)
510	KN - HD	by 25 November (returned to KN by 8 December)
512	HD - KN	by 21 December (joining 510 & 511)

Fleet News

Last month's report of 535 (LX59 DCY) entering service was premature; after investigation it was found to be 536 actually tracking on Bustimes as 535. 535 was under final paint completion at Mardens in mid-December so should be entering service early in the New Year.

On 16 December 2022, 851 (AO57 EZL) performed the 694 School service for Chambers.

Enviro 200s now rotate from CN to KN for the vehicle usage on ECC routes 71/2 and 94A/B. The increased complement of Enviro 200s at KN have meant that odd workings have occurred, in particular on 19 December when usual CN based 264 (EU59 AYP) worked several early morning 753 Sudbury to Bury St Edmunds services for Chambers. It was reported that the service had not previously run since 6 December so perhaps reduction of school work at KN due to holidays prompted cover at SY. Due to engineering rotation KN vehicles could regularly be seen from Basildon in the south of Essex to Castle Heddingham in the north, but can now also be seen in Suffolk as proven again on Christmas Eve when KN based Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President 588 (PLO2 RBY) performed on the 753 and 754 services reaching Bury St Edmunds, providing driver and / or vehicle cover for Chambers.

Further to EBM 694, 10 months after acquisition Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Gemini Eclipse 2 LX59 DCV is still yet to be refurbished and resides at Clacton with Enviro 200 YX60 FCE and Trainers LX09 AZC/P. This will presumably become 534 as the batch 531-9 are numbered in registration order and 533 is DCU and 535 is DCY. A visitor to Clacton after Christmas was Enviro 200 MMC 202 (YX69 NPG) from Konectbus, seen departing Clacton not in service on 29 December.

Service News

Revisions from 1 January 2023 are detailed on page 7.

With thanks to Alan Moore,
John Podgorski & the
Heddingham website.

Right: The acquisition of Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 539 (LX59 DDF), ex Go Ahead London WVL331, was reported last month. It is seen after conversion to single door, outside Clacton Depot on 3 December 2022. **Mark Lloyd**



Heddingham News in Pictures

Further to last month, 462 (NK56 KJN) continues in service in Go North East livery, as illustrated in Pier Avenue, Clacton on route 98 on 29 December 2022.

Mark Lloyd

By 7 January 2023 both the fleet numbers visible in this photo had been removed, with '462' replacing the side one in the same position.



ADL Dart / Pointer 257 (EU56 FLM) has lost its Covid inspired 'facemask', with the lower dash panel receiving the 'new' version of white fleet name, with the original style still carried on the sides. It is also seen in Pier Avenue, Clacton on 29 December 2022.

Mark Lloyd

A photo of 257 with mask, taken at the same location on 28 August 2020, was in EBN 677.



On 16 & 20 December 2022 route 71/2 was operated by blue Transbus Dart / Pointer 287 (HW54 BUE) which then worked on 94/A on 21st-23rd. 287 is seen on route 71 in Brentwood High Street on 16th, with a festive message on the blinds, although from Chambers rather than Heddingham. The route number is on a piece of paper in the windscreen.

Chris Stewart

Another unusual vehicle on 71/2 was Solo 911 on 22 December.



The position with the ex-London United Scania OmniCities is thought to be as follows.

In service, showing temporary allocated fleet numbers:

- 57 YT09 ZCE Entered service at Rochford mid-December, plain red livery
- 83 YT59 RYJ Entered service in November, plain white livery
- 94 YT59 SFY In service at Frating since September, plain red livery
- 104 YT59 SFF In service at Frating since September, plain red livery, NIBS fleet
- 109 YR59 FYO In service at Frating, later with NIBS; plain red livery
- 110 YR59 FYP Entered service at Rochford early in December, fleet livery.

Those in service have been converted to single door layout. Currently they are carrying temporary fleet numbers, the same as their original numbers at London United but excluding the SP prefix, but they will eventually be numbered in the Scania double deck series once it is known how many are going on fleet. Meanwhile those fitted with ticket machines have been tracking under the fleet numbers of previously withdrawn 4xx vehicles.

With thanks to the companies, John Lidstone and Matthew Evans.



by Richard Delahoy

Christmas & New Year Services

Saturday 24 December 2022: normal Saturday service, with an early finish on Harlow 66, 510 and Southend 1, 2.

Sunday 25th / Monday 26th: special service on 133, 309, 510 (for Stansted Airport); no other services.

Tuesday 27th: Sunday timetables on all routes.

Wednesday 28th / Thursday 29th / Friday 30th: Saturday timetables on all routes.

Saturday 31st: as December 24. Sunday 1 January 2023: as December 26.

Monday 2nd: Sunday timetables on all routes. Tuesday 3rd: normal services resumed.

Colchester

The Park & Ride service is normally only operated by the four black-liveried Enviro 200 MMCs 4123-5 but, due to a vehicle shortage, standard liveried 4039 was used on 17 December, then 4323 on 19th and 4324 on 20th.

Enviro 200 3992 (GN07 DME), withdrawn last October, was removed from the depot on 3 January, presumably for scrap.

Further to previous issues, Southend heritage liveried Enviro 400 MMC 6499 was still in service at Colchester, on loan from Southend, into the New Year.

Southend

We reported in EBM 691/692 that Versas 4182, 4186 & 4240 had 'We're heading to the beach' graphics added to promote route 9, and that more Versas were to follow. However, this scheme did not take off as anticipated and indeed, as reported in EBM 702, 4240 has now been repainted into new livery and no longer has the graphics.

Harlow

The main news this month is that Green Line livery has been revived for route 724. Further to the last two issues where it was reported that VDL / Wrightbus Pulsar 2 3771 has been out of use, it now transpires this was because it was being repainted into the new livery at Alexander Dennis, Harlow. The livery design is remarkably similar to First Bus's Urban 2 livery, with three wedges of colours split diagonally, vivid green at the front, purple at the back and white in the middle. There is even a First style (though slightly thinner) dividing line of a different shade of purple, between the main purple and the white. Large 'GL' in green are on the white plus there is route branding on the side and cove panels. The livery is matched by new publicity material for the route including new printed timetables.

Overall VDL availability for route 724 improved in December over recent months. However, there were cuts to other routes due to vehicle unavailability.

With thanks to John Card, Tony Higgs, Adam Kelleher, John Lidstone, Keith Sadler, LOTS and the Omnibus Society.

Dealer Stock Movements December 2022

Vehicles In

From **Cardiff Bus**: Scania CN57 BKE/U/FGA

From **First Essex**: Volvo B7RLE MX05 CFK. This is ex-First Essex 66821, see page 9.

From **First Halifax**: Volvo B7TLs YJ04 FZL/T/X, YJ54 XTT, YJ06 XLM, WX56 HJZ

From **Metrolink**: Enviro 400s SN12 EGY/Z / EHF-K/P/S/T/V/W / HER, SN62 AAD/F/K/V.

From **Nottingham City Transport**: Scania YT11 LTF, YT61 GOJ

From **RATP London**: Scania YT10 UWH / XBU/V/Y

From **Rotala**: Scania YT13 HKY, YN63 BYO/P

Vehicles Out

Als Coaches, Liverpool: Enviro 400s SN12 EHE/S

Brighton Horizon Coaches: Scania NK56 KHZ

Faresaver Buses, Chippenham: Enviro 200 YX17 NRO

First South West: Volvo B9TL LX59 FCY

First Eastern Counties: Volvo B9TLs LX59 DAO / DBU/V

First West Yorkshire: Volvo B9TLs LK59 CWN/P/V/X / CXG / FCP/U

Highlands Council: Scania YT59 SFN/SGZ

New Adventure Cardiff: Enviro 400 HPO5 BUS

Sharpes Coaches, Nottingham: Volvo B9TL HF11 HCU

Top View London: Scania YR59 FZF, YT59 PBX, YT10 UWG/XBV/W/X/Y

Ensignbus

RM371 was again dressed up in Christmas lights in 2022 and used to deliver presents in the Southend and Thurrock areas during the pre-Christmas period, see EBN 681 and EBM 693 for more info and photos taken in 2020 and 2021.

The customary special one-day only service X10, Southend to Lakeside via Basildon, again ran on Boxing Day 2022, this year restored back to its pre-pandemic half-hourly frequency. Two round trips were worked by ex-Southend Transport Van Hool Astromega 245 (JEV 245Y). It is seen below passing First Essex's Hadleigh depot.

John G Lidstone

With thanks to John Lidstone and Ross Newman.



Right: Taken just a few hours prior to the rain washing away the snow on 18 December 2022, 1613 (YX72 OND), is working Sunday only ECC 66A at Loughton Station, but use of white on a bright yellow background makes the route number almost unreadable - a classic case of a fancy idea being totally impractical.

Owen Woodliffe

Below: Mercedes-Benz Sprinters meet at Hertford Bus Station. Central Connect 1101 (CC04 GAL) on route H4 and anagrammatically numbered Arriva 1011

(BF67 WGP), allocated to Ware depot (so outside our normal coverage) on route 379. The age difference between the vehicles is not as large as the registrations suggest, 1101 was previously registered GU19 KKE! 4 January 2023, the first 2023 photo in EBM. **Allan White**



Acquired Vehicles

ADL Dart / Enviro 200 KX58 BGY was acquired from Go North East for dealer stock in April 2022 but has now been added to the operational fleet. It is on all-over white. It was new to Courtney, Bracknell in January 2009.

Further to the news in EBM 693 (January 2022) that Stephenson's took over eight commercial school services and nine buses from New Horizon Travel from 1 January 2022 (with the owners of New Horizon set to retire), which has been updated in various EBMs since, it has come to light that two vehicles that did not go to Stephenson's were acquired by Panther Travel last spring. These are ex-Dublin Volvo Olympians / Alexander RH S246/264 YOO. S246 is used on schools work and local private hires but S264 is being cannibalised for spare parts. These had previously been mentioned in EBN, under the Ensignbus Dealer Stock Movements, S246 in EBN 545 (September 2009) and S264 in the next issue. Both had been acquired by Ensignbus and were re-registered from their Dublin numbers of 98-D-20422 (S246) and 98-D-20423 (S264) and sold to Redbridge Transport. It is thought that they moved on to New Horizon during 2014. They were in white livery with a pink skirt with thin yellow line above whilst with Redbridge Transport, the yellow line was removed and the pink painted blue by New Horizon.

Right, top: S246 YOO, still in New Horizon colours, about to go down North Hill, Colchester on 1 December 2022. When in Dublin it had roller blinds, at Redbridge Transport these were panelled over and this continued at New Horizon, but Panther have retrofitted a front LED blind.

Right, bottom: A few minutes earlier than the above photo, S246 YOO seen laying over in Colchester High Street. Both **Alan Moore**

Other Vehicle News

Enviro 200 AB09 PAN (ex LJ09 KPU) has returned from Purple Parking at Heathrow, with similar DB09 PAN (ex LJ09 KPR) going as a replacement in the first week of January 2023.

With thanks to Adam Barham, Adam Kelleher and Alan Moore.



Acquired Vehicles

Enviro 200 MMC SN16 OVM was reported last month as fleet number 318, and this is how it appears on Bustimes, however, in the photo below it is clearly carrying 321.

The low winter sun highlights the filth thrown up by salt mixed with road dirt after a heavy overnight frost on 10 December 2022. SN16 OVM at Waltham Abbey waits to depart on its third trip on route 505 to Harlow at 1150, having also inter-worked on three recently introduced Saturday journeys on Harlow local route 20 and two Waltham Abbey local routes 14/A. Later in the afternoon it will also appear on routes 22/22A and 13B.

Owen Woodliffe.

Last month's issue included a photo of a Central Connect Enviro 200 on the same route at the same location on the last day of their operation of the 505.



With thanks to Owen Woodliffe

Other Operators

by Roger A Smith

Fords Coaches, Althorne

ADL Enviro 400 LK55 KKF, ex Metroliner TE674, was acquired by March 2021 but not reported then. It has however been off the road since April 2022. It remains all red, but has had an LED blind fitted.

Trident S804 BWC was re-registered to S66 BUS in August 2022 and T650 KPU changed to T80 BUS in November. Fords thus now have the following 'BUS' registrations: C7, T80, T90, W80, W90, YN06.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy.

Right: A Christmas Day photo. Cooks Coaches of Westcliff YN66 VYG, an Irizar i6 integral, parked on the East Cliff, Bournemouth 25 December 2022. It had previously been with Graham of Kelvedon.

Paul Harvey



Bus Fleets in Essex

by Richard Delahoy

We thought it would be of interest to take a snapshot of the relative sizes of the fleets of the bus companies in Essex. Of course, operators don't neatly fit the administrative or geographical boundaries of Essex, hence the information below includes some vehicles running elsewhere, so Central Connect and Vectare include Hertfordshire services, Hedingham & Chambers Suffolk and Stephenson's & NIBS Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, but they give a good general indication of size. We have included coaches (not that there are many of those in most fleets listed) but not driver trainers, vaccination buses or Ensignbus's heritage fleet. The fleet strength figures are our best assessment of the actual active fleets as at the end of 2022 but may be slightly adrift, records are not always that clear!

The National Express figures comprise the coaches used on NX services and the Stansted Airport car park shuttle fleet, none are used on conventional local bus services. Airport Bus operate a coach service from Stansted to London. For completeness, as the depot is physically in Essex, we've also shown at the end the Arriva depot in Grays which only operates red TfL bus services.

Fleet sizes change a little from month to month but the data here represents the approximate position at the end of 2022. The figures for licence authorisation are the number of vehicles permitted under the relevant operator licence(s) at the operating centres / depots listed, in some cases this is considerably more than actually operated.

Operator and Depots	Licence Authorisation	Fleet Strength
First Essex Buses Depots: Basildon, Chelmsford, Colchester, Hadleigh	361	314
Stephenson's & NIBS Depots: Boreham, Maldon, Haverhill, Rochford, Wickford Outstations: Braintree, Ely, Frating, Hutton	165	136
Arriva Kent Thameside Depots: Colchester, Harlow, Southend	179	129
Hedingham & Chambers (Konect Bus) Depots: Clacton, Kelvedon, Sible Hedingham, Sudbury	129	103
Ensign Bus Depot: Purfleet	80	65
National Express Depots: Stansted Airport (Start Hill and Long Stay car park)	80	Not known
Central Connect (Galleon Travel) Depots: Stansted Airport (Start Hill), Roydon	55	46
Panther Travel: Depot: Harwich (outstations Dunmow, Colchester)	20	13
Airport Bus: Depots: Stansted Airport	20	Not known
Vectare Depots: Rettendon Common, Wickford	17	19
Arrow Taxis/Essex Dart Depot: Maldon	12	Not known
Arriva London North Depot: Grays - buses all used on TfL operations only	70	70

Turning to coach operators, some of the more significant players - with 10 or more discs - in Essex include (vehicle authorisation in brackets - not all operate that many vehicles):

Acme, Bishop's Stortford (40), Brentwood Coaches (30), Cooks Coaches, Westcliff (14), Dons Coaches, Dunmow (24), Flagfinders, Braintree (40), Fords, Althorne (25), Fourways, Chelmsford (14), Hailstone Travel, Wickford (11), Kirbys Coaches, Rayleigh (10), Lodge Coaches, High Easter (32), Peter Godward Coaches, Basildon (12), SBC Leisure, Leigh (20).

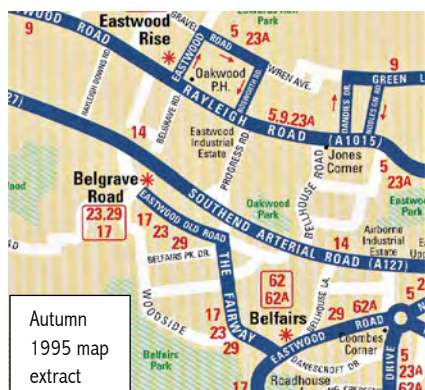
A number of these, such as Acme, Dons, Flagfinders, Fords, Fourways, Lodges and SBC, run buses on school services and in some cases, also operate minor local bus services.

Discovering Eastwood Belgrave Road by Steve Grimwade

I became interested in Essex buses, and particularly Southend Transport, in the early 1990s, when I would find myself spending a day here and there in Southend during the summer months; it wasn't a town I had spent any time in previously. The buses of Southend Transport soon caught my attention and I quickly became aware of what a varied and eclectic fleet of buses they possessed.

I obtained maps and some route information and each summer during that decade would come to photograph the buses in the town, always planning in advance where I would take photographs. The first, and often last, location was at Eastwood (Belfairs), Belgrave Road, as it was a good location for the sun late morning and was close to the A127 Arterial Road for entering and exiting the town.

I was amazed to find that services 23 and 29, and other services over the coming years, had a terminal manoeuvre that involved what was effectively a three-point turn, using Eastwood Old Road and Belgrave Road, these being dead ends and therefore not giving buses a chance to make the manoeuvre using side roads. The vehicles would, from Eastwood Old Road (and still do) reverse into Belgrave Road before then turning left back into Eastwood Old Road to sit on the stand just along on the left-hand side.



Above: Leyland Fleetline 5321 (originally 221, XTE 221V) has pulled forward from the alighting stop to straddle the entrance to Belgrave Road and will now turn sharp left - heading straight at the photographer! - before setting back into Belgrave Road and then pulling forward back into Eastwood Old Road. 25 June 1999. **Steve Grimwade**

At that time the headway on the 29 was every 15 minutes and it was always interesting to see what type of vehicle would turn up next, it could be a Leyland Fleetline or Bristol VR, or maybe a Leyland National. Later vehicles included Leyland Olympians, Dennis Lances and Dennis Dart SLFs. These vehicles were, of course, all one person operated, so making the terminal arrangement even more interesting. Sadly, the Routemasters had gone by the time of my first visit to Belgrave Road.

This sort of terminal reversing arrangement was, I know, not uncommon in decades gone by around the country but to find it still being used in the 1990s was a surprise, as it still is today. I would be interested to know if this sort of arrangement currently happens anywhere else in Essex. Does anyone know?

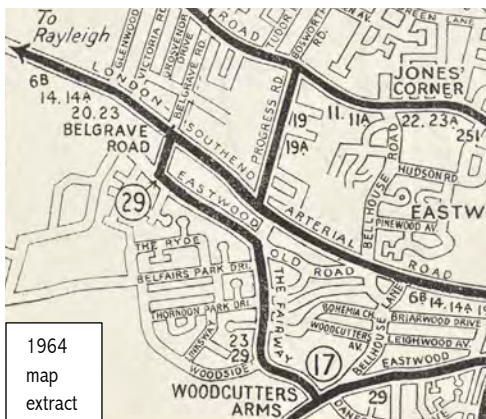
Right: Leyland National 726 (GGE 174T, new to Greater Glasgow PTE) drops back into the wide entrance to Belgrave Road on 30 June 1994 before returning to Leigh on the 23.
Steve Grimwade



Richard Delahoy adds some historical notes

Buses first started to use Eastwood Old Road and to terminate at its junction with Belgrave Road in June 1959 when the 23 from Leigh Station was extended there from its previous terminus at the junction of The Fairway and Eastwood Old Road, probably reflecting the development of housing along that road. Some buses on the 23 continued to Rayleigh via the A127 and these also now used Eastwood Old Road and Belgrave Road to reach the A127. At that time various side roads still had junctions with the A127 and indeed, there were intersections in the dual carriageway, so that 23s from Rayleigh would turn right off the A127 into Belgrave Road. Likewise, from 1948 until April 1964, the 6/6A/6B performed a U turn across the A127 here to terminate, having come from Kent Elms Corner along the A127. Those junctions and intersections were still there into the mid-1970s at least, as I regularly used one in my car on the way to and from work in Billericay, but were later closed as they had become increasingly dangerous, with the only crossing points on the fast and busy A127 west of Kent Elms Corner being Progress Road / The Fairway and Bellhouse Lane / Road.

There was a major restructuring of many Southend town services in April 1964 and the 29 was then extended to Belgrave Road to give a service to Southend, with the 6/6A being cut back to Kent Elms Corner. At times two buses could be turning there simultaneously, one 23 and one 29, and special instructions were displayed to drivers.



During the 'bus war' of the early 1990s, Thamesway's competing 29B also ran to Belgrave Road, up to every 10 minutes, but their minibuses made a U-turn at the wide junction without the need to reverse. Those competing operations had ceased in August 1993, just before Steve's visits. There was also a 28 version of the 29 at one stage. In 1995 the 23 morphed into the 17, a cross-town service supported by Council subsidies. From September 1997 it was diverted on its approach to the terminus, running via Belfairs Park Drive and Woodside to create a one-way terminal loop, avoiding the need for reversing at Belgrave Road, although the rationale for the diversion was to improve access to buses from housing distant from the existing routes. Operation was generally with minibuses.

Today Belgrave Road is served just by Arriva Southend 29, now every 30 minutes (hourly Sundays) and with no evening service at all. Buses still reverse in the time-honoured fashion, but I can't think of any other "mainstream" local routes in southeast Essex that regularly require a reverse except Stephensons 60/60A at Paglesham as the road there is a dead end.

My Essex Tram Driving Experience

by Alan Osborne

Back in September last year I did something that was totally unplanned and unexpected. I climbed into the cab of an electric passenger carrying tram and drove it along the track. The truly amazing thing is that this was in Romford. Let me set the scene.

During the COVID lockdown I took the opportunity to exercise by taking walks around local parks. A favourite Romford location was Raphael Park in London Road which is served by TfL buses 174 and 498. Looking out of a nearside upper deck window the park approach was distinguished by a lake and a fountain. Years ago I remembered seeing the same vista from the top deck of a City Coach Company Leyland Titan.

On the last visit I decided instead to cross the road where there is a car park and also the narrow entrance to Lodge Farm Park. I was in for a surprise because when I had walked as far as Black's Brook, there was a railway station platform with a notice board for the Lodge Farm Park 7.25" gauge railway. It is owned and maintained by the Havering Miniature Railway Club, who are tenants of Havering Council Parks Department.

Construction had started in 2016. The railway is open from 1100 - 1600 on alternate Sundays from late April to early October, plus a couple of special Christmas event days. The line runs from Havering Halt to Black's Brook (no boarding / alighting) and return, a total distance of 772 metres. The stock includes a live steam locomotive named "Gwendoline" as well as several battery powered vehicles including Metropolitan Railway number 21 and a covered Lodge Farm Park red tram, numbered 3 with seating for five. Railway style tickets are issued for the £2 round trip.

After the morning rush there was a quiet period so I was able to hire the tram for a bespoke tour, and was offered the opportunity to drive. Number 3 was fitted with a simple speed controller with an added 'Dead Man's handle'. Other driving duties included obeying the home signal and collecting the token for the single track run to Black's Brook and return, this permitted only one unit (or two if travelling together) to enter the block section. The bell had to be sounded as we crossed a local park road.

A very pleasurable experience, which does not appear to be widely known amongst those tram enthusiasts I have since met, and certainly very much closer than Seaton!

Below: Red tram number 3, with 'Lodge Farm Park' fleet name in traditional London Transport style, stands outside the shed at Havering Halt on Sunday 25 September 2022. **Alan Osborne**



50th Anniversary of Eastern National Leyland Nationals

The first 50 (plus one replacement) Eastern National Leyland Nationals, 1700-1750.

The Leyland National was conceived at a time when it appeared the industry was moving towards high capacity single-deckers as a highly standardised bus assembled by semi-skilled workers using mass production techniques borrowed from the car industry. Set up as a joint venture between British Leyland and the new National Bus Company, a brand new assembly plant was established at Lillyhall, near Workington, with a planned output of 2,000 buses a year (never achieved!). Hence it represented a revolutionary change of approach in its design, appearance, specification and manufacture. The first prototypes were built in 1969 and given extensive testing, and the bus was unveiled at the 1970 Commercial Motor Show. A new turbocharged engine, the 510, was developed for it. The first production bus to enter service was ERM 35K, with Cumberland Motor Services in March 1972.

Eastern National's first order for Leyland Nationals was for 18 vehicles, to be delivered in May 1972. In April 1971 Eastern National had acquired two 1958 built Leyland PSUC1/1 / Metro Cammell buses from East Midland, YAL 368/9, and numbered them 1000/1. (These non-standard vehicles were purchased because of the increased OMO requirement at the time and spare Bristol / ECW vehicles were not available.) The LNs were to be numbered 1002-19 in a Leyland sequence following on from these two vehicles.

In the early 1970s delays with vehicle production were common; in April 1972 the expected delivery date for the LNs was revised to July; they hadn't arrived by August but were expected the next month. However, in September delivery was delayed further to late November. Also in September, the decision was made to number these into their own separate series and so they were to become 1700-17, following on from the 1600 class of Bristol RELH / ECWs. This decision was possibly because the PSUCs were due for imminent withdrawal, their last month in service with EN was October 1972, so it made more sense to start a separate series for the LNs. In November the LNs were delayed yet again, until January 1973, but this time the first three, 1700-2, did arrive then, and so 50 years ago this month. 1703-5 were delivered in February, 1706-11 in March, and the first batch was completed when 1712-17 arrived in May. They were registered WNO 549-566L. They were delivered as 52 seaters, but before entering service two of the four inward facing seats on the offside were replaced by a luggage pen, this being done at Central Works, Chelmsford. 1700-10 were allocated to Chelmsford and 1711-17 to Basildon. Those at CF were for local services, particularly the 41 group, and also country services like route 351, Chelmsford Bus Station - Warley Eagle Way (which, despite the numerous changes to services in the last half-century, including to the 351 itself, today has the same terminal points). In Brentwood they met up with similar vehicles introduced around the same time by London Country, on Green Line service 721 from Brentwood to Aldgate. The LC buses had the same green plastic bus seats but were painted in NBC white and green dual purpose livery. EN's had been delivered in all-over NBC green with chrome bumpers, but received central white bands (although at the time not around the front) and the bumpers were painted white before they entered service.

The next batch of LNs followed on three months after the arrival of 1712-17, when 1719-21/23 were delivered in August 1973. The full batch was to have been 1718-35 (NEV 675-692M), but during the course of delivery (by October 1973) the order was reduced by four and so ended with 1731. All were delivered by February 1974. These differed from the original LNs in having a luggage space on the nearside in place of three inward facing seats, this being fitted as part of the build, and so seated 49. The manufacture of the gearbox was also different. These vehicles were classified 1151/1R/0402, the originals had been the same but ending 0401 (11 for 11.3m length, 51 for 510 engine, 1R single-door, right hand drive, 0401 or 2 for transmission options, seating layout, etc.).

1706 was involved in an accident whilst on the 351 halfway into only its second day of service. It was stored at Central Works for a few months pending a decision on its future, but it was eventually withdrawn in August 1973. The 1974 order for Leyland Nationals was for 19 vehicles, 18 plus a replacement for 1706. These had a shorter roof pod and different interior colours (although still with green seats and chrome hand rails) and were classified 11351/1R (which stood for the same as 1151/1R as outlined above, but the 3 was more specific to the 11.3m length; the 0401 or 2 sub-classification was dropped). Unusually, these didn't receive a full block of registrations, they were split into four blocks, HWC 83-87N (1732-6), GJN 997-9N (1737-39), HAR 486-9N (1740-3) and JNO 193-9N (1744-50). 1732-6 were the only EN LNs to have two digit registration numbers.

Eventually Eastern National bought 225 Leyland Nationals (1700-1924), including the incredible number of 63 with S registrations, and 15 Leyland National 2s (1925-1939) new. The last new LNs were V-reg and the last four,

1921-4, were delivered in November 1979. The first 12 Leyland National 2s were also V-reg, with the first four, 1925-8, being delivered in March 1980. The last three, and the only three to be delivered new with moquette seats, although a few were later retrofitted, were W-reg, with the last of all, 1939, being delivered in October 1980.

Eastern National and spin-off company Thamesway later boosted the number of LNs they owned by acquiring some second-hand examples, plus others were taken on loan, but there is no room to go into these here. Full details of all of the new and second-hand Leyland Nationals owned by Eastern National, Thamesway and Essex Buses can be found in the Group's publications 'Fleet Record Volumes 1-3' (Volume 2 is available as a free PDF download from our website).

Right: 1715 (WNO 564L) looks resplendent at Central Works, Chelmsford on 12 July 1975, fresh from its first repaint, the fourth one to be so treated; it had been new in May 1973. It was allocated to BN before and after repaint so it's not clear why the destination blind has been removed.

Below: Canvey depot closed on the night of Saturday 29 April 1978.

The last bus to leave there on service was 1725 (NEV 682M) working a trip on route 3 that extended in Southend to the Greyhound Racing Stadium in Sutton Road, in this case showing 3M as a route number and with destination slip board in the windscreen.. Here it returns to the depot for the last time at about 2230, its CY depot plate already removed. It was then transferred to Hadleigh (HH). Both **Richard Delahoy**



Eastern National's first Leyland National, 1700 (WNO 549L), laying over in Rochford Station yard on the Wednesday & Sunday service 404 from Canvey to Southend and Rochford hospitals. Chelmsford allocated, the bus was on loan to Canvey and is displaying a completely wrong destination of Eastwood Belgrave Road. 21 September 1977.

Richard Delahoy



Brand new Leyland Nationals as delivered, without white bands, fleet names and fleet number / depot plates and with chrome bumpers. Also with four inward facing seats at the front offside. 1704 (WNO 553L) and 1705 (WNO 554L), 8 February 1973, Central Works, Chelmsford.

It was common practice, at least in the early days, that as buses left the factory, the blinds showed the final three numerals of the five-digit chassis numbers (in this case 00360 and 00361).

Eric Thompson



Before entering service 1705 had received a white band but then lost it again following the 1980 NBC decision to cease white bands on single-decker repaints to save money. It is seen on loan from Chelmsford Depot to Clacton on 19 December 1981, working the 1035 Ipswich - Clacton 123 in Harwich Road, Mistley.

Robert Appleton



1707 (WNO 556L), allocated to Chelmsford, with CF depot plates, but on loan to Basildon pending entry into service of BN's own LNs, on route 26 (Romford-Basildon-Southend) at Southend Pier Hill on 27 May 1973. This was the first day of the extension of route 26 from Basildon to Southend (to partly replace services 2A/H) and was originally to have been operated by new Bristol VRs, but delays in their delivery meant LNs were used instead, with increased standing capacity (22 instead of 8; in February 1974 standing capacity on all LNs was increased to 22). Note the Southend Daimler Fleetline behind still has its original blue roof (compare with photo on inside front cover).

Richard Delahoy

1733 (with a two digit registration number, HWC 84N) in Rigby Avenue, Mistley in April 1976.

Robert Appleton

1749 (JNO 198N), Eastern National's fiftieth Leyland National, at Central Works, with the floodlights of the old Chelmsford City Football Club ground, also in New Writtle Street, in the background. 12 July 1975, it had been new the previous month, although was part of the 1974 order. In this case the blind isn't displaying the last three digits of the chassis number (02321) but as this photo was taken on a Group visit someone may well have changed the blinds!

Eric Thompson



1737 (GJN 997N) was one of only three Leyland Nationals to receive GJN-N registrations, the other two being 1738-9 (GJN 998-9N). They were also the first buses new to EN to be allocated a former Southend registration mark (HJ & JN were Southend marks until 1974 but were reallocated to Chelmsford as part of the rationalisation of vehicle licencing offices). Front and rear views at Canvey depot on 1 January 1975, shortly after delivery and prior to entering service, show it in original form with white band on sides and rear but not front, white NBC symbols, and Leyland badge on front. It was the penultimate new bus allocated to Canvey (CY) Depot before that depot closed in 1978 (1753 was the last new bus, allocated to CY in December 1975). In the left background of the top photo is a withdrawn Bristol LD, Canvey being used at the time to store many withdrawn buses, mostly LD and LS types.



1737 again, five years later, on route 26 on 25 March 1980. Now allocated to Hadleigh following the closure of Canvey, it is on the second day of service 26 to the newly developing estate at Little Wheatleys, Rayleigh, turning at Bardfield Way. In updated livery, the white band continues around the front, the NBC symbol is now red & blue on white and the Leyland badge on the front has been replaced by an NBC one.

All photos this page
Richard Delahoy



Here is the last of the buses featured in this article, 1750 (JNO 199N), new in June 1975, in the 1986 privatisation livery on Station Approach, Harwich on 9 March 1991, working Parkeston Quay - Harwich 120. This was a pool vehicle at the time, note no depot plate, and no destination blind.

Robert Appleton



1703 (WNO 552L) was transferred to the driver training fleet in October 1978 and was repainted blue and renumbered 9015 in the driver trainers sequence. It is seen here at the Driver Training School yard adjacent to Central Works in Chelmsford on 7 October 1978. It made a surprise return to passenger service in July 1982, repainted back to green and renumbered back to 1703, and lasted until October 1988.

Richard Delahoy



1708 (WNO 557L) was also withdrawn in October 1988. It is seen working for the Salvation Army as a second-hand clothing shop at the shops at the corner of Groby Road and Blackbird Road, Leicester on 13 July 1990.

Adrian Rodgers





Above: 1742 (HAR 488N) is seen in Basildon at Industrial Site Number 1 on Gardiners Lane South (York's factory) on 25 March 1980 on the evening peak trip on the 153 to Stanford-le-Hope. The 152/3/4 group of services then ran Chelmsford-Basildon-Grays but one trip each way went off route to & from Basildon's industrial areas, terminating at Paycocke Road by the Carreras factory. Dedicated services to Basildon's factories have long since ceased, except for the NIBS staff shuttle 31 to the First Data Resources offices, but services 94/A/B still serve this stop today.

Richard Delahoy

Right: As mentioned, Eastern National's Leyland Nationals were originally to have been numbered in a 'Leyland' series, following on from the two Leyland PSUC1/1 / Metro Cammells acquired in 1971, 1000-1. Here is the second of the pair, 1001 (YAL 369) at Clacton Bus Station on route 123 to Manningtree on 8 June 1972.

Eric Thompson



Rear Cover: Leigh in Winter

Top: First Essex StreetLite 47649 (SN15 AEL) on route 21 along Leigh Broadway, taken from the top deck of Ensignbus RM371 being used as a Christmas presents bus (see page xx) on 17 December 2022.

Bottom: A photo from last winter. A cold two hour vigil in two degrees for the photographer from 0605 on 15 January 2022 to get some atmospheric thick fog photos, as illustrated by First Essex Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 36220, followed by similar 37985, at 0707 at London Road, Leigh-on-Sea. Both **John G Lidstone**



ESSEX BUS MAGAZINE Issue 705 January 2023
Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964