

ESSEX BUS NEWS

**No.578
June 2012**



ESSEX BUS ENTHUSIASTS GROUP
www.essexbus.org.uk



To mark the Diamond Jubilee, St Asaph (Wales), Perth (Scotland) and Chelmsford were granted city status by Her Majesty the Queen. This signal honour for Chelmsford and the County of Essex (hitherto possessing two cathedrals but no cities) provided **First Essex** with an early opportunity to deploy the new corporate livery plus localised fleetname. Solo 53136 (EO02 NFV) was first out of the hat to receive the new colours and 'Chelmsford City' name, here seen at Heybridge Basin on 22nd May (*Dave Arnold*) and in Victoria Road, Chelmsford on 24th May. (*Kevin Smith*).



Essex Bus News

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Your reports and observations

Members reports, quality photos (prints, slides or JPGs) and original articles are always welcome.

The Editors exercise the normal discretion to publish contributions in full, in part or not at all and cannot guarantee publication in any particular month.

Every effort is made to ensure accuracy but the Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors published.

Views expressed in EBN do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Group.

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Dates for your diary

■ EBN PRESS DATES

EBN dated

July

August

reports to Editors by

June 30 (not as stated last month)

August 4

Despatch day is posted to the website as soon as it is known. Please allow reasonable time for postal delays (at least seven working days) before claiming non-receipt. Replacements can be obtained from the Distribution Officer (see Group Directory).

front cover

News of the month is the sale of H C Chambers & Sons Ltd. to the Go Ahead Group. One of the youngest deckers in the fleet, Volvo/Olympian S233 RLH is seen on trunk route 753 in Braiswick on the last day of private ownership - Saturday 2nd June.

Russell Young

back cover

"England's green and pleasant land"

London Bus Company RT1700, acquired from a preservationist and now with full Class VI licence, approaches North Weald Station on the new 339 on 4th June. *Russell Young*

The Group Tour on May 26th was blessed with glorious weather. Luxury transport was supplied by **Talisman's** immaculate DAF YJN 455S, here posed at picturesque Haddenham, near Ely. *Chris Stewart*

■ SOUTH ESSEX MEETINGS

- ▶ **Tuesday June 26: Visit to Castlepoint Transport Museum.** Meet 19.00 onwards. A trip on a special vintage bus of the collection is anticipated. There is no charge for the visit but a collection will be taken towards the Museum's restoration fund
- ▶ **Tuesday July 24. An evening visit to Nelson's (NIBS) at Bruce Grove, Wickford.** You may go direct to depot but a bus will pick up visitors at Wickford Station to connect with the arrival at 19.34 train, which is the 18.55 ex Liverpool Street.
- ▶ There is **no** South Essex meeting in **August**.

Meetings return to usual Wickford venue for:

- ▶ **Monday September 17 - part 2 of 'the Main Road', aka route 251.** An evening of nostalgia looking at the City Coach Company service from London to Southend, archive photos, memories, etc. We had just reached the Westcliff takeover of City at the conclusion of the May meeting - we'll pick up the story from the 1950's onwards.
- ▶ **Monday October 29** - speaker tba
- ▶ **Monday November 26 - Harris Coaches.** Dave Arnold and Fred Lawrance
- ▶ **Tuesday December 18 - Xmas Social.** 20 Years ago by Richard Delahoy.

■ NORTH ESSEX MEETINGS

Venue: downstairs room at the Friends Meeting House, Church Street, Colchester, just south of "Jumbo" (the water tower) and behind the Mercury Theatre. Town centre bus stops and parking are nearby. Doors open at 19.15 for an informal chat, with the main talk or show from 19.45 to 21.45. PLEASE NOTE NEW TIMES: NOW 15 MINUTES EARLIER. £1.50 donation towards room hire, please. Slides/digital photos are preferred, but prints can also be shown. Members and guests welcome. *Dave Arnold*

2012 programme ~ slide shows

- ▶ **Friday July 13** - Steven Hughes
- ▶ **Friday August 10** - Trevor Brookes
- ▶ **Friday September 14** - Alan Osborne
- ▶ **Friday October 12** - Chris Stewart
- ▶ **Friday November 9** - Steven Maskell
- ▶ **Friday December 14** - Dave Arnold and Gary Sharpe

■ TOURS & VISITS

- ▶ **Tuesday June 19** - Evening visit to Talisman Coaches. Departs Colchester North Station 19.00. Fare £5, pay on bus.
- ▶ **Tuesday June 26** - Evening visit to Castlepoint Transport Museum - see above.
- ▶ **Tuesday July 24** - Evening visit to NIBS - see above.
- ▶ **Tuesday August 14** - Travel back in time on our Group evening tour by **Bristol Lodekka**. Departing Colchester North Station at 19.00 with Carter's 1960 ex Crosville FS6G Lodekka 314 PFM, the evening will include a tour of Constable Country with scenic photo stops, a depot visit and maybe a half pint of beer! Return to Colchester North at 22.00. Fare £10. To book, please send cheque, payable to **E.B.E.G.**, together with SAE to **Keith Woods**, 34 Normandie Way, Bures, Suffolk CO8 5BE

■ EVENTS

- ▶ **Saturday June 30 - Ipswich Transport and Model Festival.**
(www.ipswichtransportmuseum.co.uk)
- ▶ **Sunday July 1 - North Weald Bus Rally.** (www.northlondontransportsociety.co.uk).
Vintage bus service 396 from Epping Central Line Station from 10.10hrs every 20 mins

until 15.50.

- ▶ **Sunday July 1 - North Norfolk Railway (Sheringham) ~ Vintage Transport Festival:** vintage buses required for operate free services around the area: The railway will pay for fuel and make a donation of up to £100 towards the cost for any bus run in service. Please let John Stewart know ASAP if you can assist: bus@johnrstewart.co.uk
www.nnrailway.co.uk/
- ▶ **Sundays August 5 and 12 - Ipswich Transport Museum Free Rides Day** from Town and Station (www.ipswichtransportmuseum.co.uk).
- ▶ **Sunday August 26 - Braintree Bus Running Day.** Vintage and Heritage services in aid of Cancer Research UK. More details next month.
- ▶ **Sunday 16 September - Showbus 2012, Duxford Airfield** - earlier than usual to dodge the showers.

Information is published in good faith and members are strongly advised to check details with the organisers, as the Group can accept no liability if events are cancelled or altered.

Study Tour by Bus

The Omnibus Society Essex & Suffolk Group are planning a study tour by service bus on Saturday July 21st, organised by Nicolas Collins and Alan Cornwell. EBEG members are welcome to join at any point on the itinerary, no booking is required. You will need to buy an £8 Essex Saver, or use your ENCTS pass if lucky enough to have one!

The planned itinerary is:

Chelmsford Bus Station	0840	First 71
Colchester Bus Station	1001	
Colchester Bus Station	1035	First 74
Clacton, Jackson Road	1129	
Clacton, Pier Avenue	1140 or 1200	First 7/7X
Walton, The Naze	1212 or 1236	
Walton, The Naze	1216 or 1240	First 7/7X
Walton, Church	1222 or 1246	
Walton Station	1326	Network Colchester 105
Thorpe Le Soken	1341	
Thorpe Le Soken	1402	First 3
Harwich, Bus Station	1435	
Harwich, Bus Station	1450 or 1520	First 103/104
Colchester Bus Station	1558 or 1628	
Colchester Bus Station	1625 or 1655	First 70
Chelmsford Bus Station	1809 or 1839	

Welcome to new member

A warm welcome this month to new member:

Lee Crust, Chelmsford - 1054

Richard Delahoy, Membership Secretary

Timetable Subscription Service

For some years the Group has offered a service whereby members can subscribe to the Essex County Council timetable books. As mentioned in recent magazines, ECC have now ceased publication of that book but an independent commercial publisher, *Here To There Publishing* (run by Group member Suzy Scott) has produced a replacement, at a somewhat higher cover price than the old Essex book.

All existing TTSS members were contacted to ask if they wished to continue; some have said they do not want the new book and their outstanding subscriptions have now been refunded. Others are taking the new book as a trial and should have received a copy of the March book (at a special Group discounted price) by the time that this magazine is published. We do not know yet when a further edition of the book may be published, but when we have further news I will contact subscribers again; until then, we are not accepting any new subscribers onto the scheme.

Richard Delahoy

Group Directory

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A calendar year subscription is £20, renewable in January.

New members may join from any month during the year, 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 £1.70 per month. E.g., a member joining in March would pay 10 x £1.70; i.e. £17.

Data Protection Act: Members' details are held on computer for the purpose of administration. If you object to your information being held in this way, please write to:

Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoenbury Road
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richard@signal-training.com

MISSING / DEFECTIVE EBNs

For replacements, contact the Distribution Officer:

Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road,
Chingford, London E4 8PT
pat_woodliffe@hotmail.com

PUBLICATION SALES

Send orders for publications to:

Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road,
Chingford, London E4 8PT

Owen also stocks a wide range of colour photos - send SAE with your requirements.

BLACK & WHITE PHOTO SALES

Lyn Watson
Willow Tree Cottage, 11 Roman Bank,
Gedney Dyke, Lincolnshire, PE12 0AR

Prints of specific EN (and predecessor) vehicles can be supplied; email with requirements:

lynw@barrons-bds.com



This tour, to visit a selection of operators in Essex and Cambridgeshire, certainly lived up to its title. Talisman's restored DAF YJN455S (in Staines Crusader livery), ably driven by Paul Smith, was our comfortable transport for the day and, following pick-ups at Colchester and Dunmow, our first visit was to Don's of Dunmow.

In fact this was really a case of two in one, as Panther Travel now have vehicles based at Don's premises, so examples from both fleets were present. Don's have a modern coach fleet and a double-deck fleet of Leyland/Volvo Olympians which includes former Hong Kong tri-axle BIG8728. Don's Spartan/East Lancs N20CKU, formerly with Yorkshire Traction, is believed to be the only example in the country. Panther's Volvo B10M/Plaxton VLT177 (formerly Thamesway N611APU) attracted interest and Alexander bodied Dart P390LPS was also present. For those who wished, there was also the opportunity to make friends with Stanley the Bull and his equine companions

who reside in the adjacent paddock.

A journey along the A120 and A10 via Royston brought us to Bassingbourn, home of Myalls'. Here we were welcomed by John Wakefield and Andrew Myall and shown round the premises. Myalls' have two operational double-deckers - Ayats AE04FUU and former Hong Kong Olympian HIL8130, a small fleet of minibuses and coaches and Marshall-bodied Dennis R404XFL. Preserved Bedford VAM/Duple FJE982D looked resplendent in the sunshine and former Alderney Bedford SB/Duple AY91 is a future project. Other vehicles of varying vintage, including former London Metrobus M999 and an ex Ingatestone Coaches Duple Dominant, were stored around the premises.

A short journey from Bassingbourn brought us to Shepreth, where we were welcomed by Cyril Kenzie. For those of us who were on the Group's tour in July 2004 (report and photos in EBN484) it was an opportunity to

Don's of Dunmow's ex-Yorkshire Traction Spartan/East Lancs N20 CKU.

All photos: Chris Stewart



One-time Thamesway City Saver Volvo/Plaxton, now Panther Travel's VLT 177.

Myalls of Bassingbourn's preserved FJE 982D, a classic Bedford VAM5 (Bedford 330 cu in diesel) with Duple Bella Venture coachwork. It was new to Loates, Bassingbourn in 1966, passing to Moule (Blue Cream Coaches) of Ashwell, and then to Gentle, Ashwell. It joined the operational Myalls fleet in 1980, serving for the rest of the 1980s until it was laid up. It was retrieved and restored between 1993 and 2002.





Bedford OB JUE 860 in course of restoration by Cyril Kenzie at Shepreth. It was new to Webb, Arncote, before passing to Harvey, Chedworth, Handover, Chedworth, Williams, Minster Lovell and J Dodsworth, Boroughbridge. Nearing completion, it is now for sale.

And here's one he restored earlier ... Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M B948 ASU, with Cyril himself on the steps. New to Hutchison's of Overtown, it served with West Coast Motors of Campbeltown, Black Prince of Leeds and Beestons of Hadleigh before settling down to the quiet life in rural Cambridgeshire.



see how Cyril's restoration projects have proceeded. Unique Bedford VAL CNW155C (the only operational example with Harrington Legionnaire bodywork) and Volvo B10M/Van Hool Servisbus B948ASU are both now splendidly restored and join a further unique vehicle - former Frame's Rickards Bedford J2/Plaxton 15 seater coach KNK373H in his fleet. Other examples of the preserved fleet including Bedford OB JBY804, VAL GUP743C and former Southdown Leyland Leopard/Harrington 750DCD were admired as well as examples of the coach fleet and OB JUE860 undergoing major restoration.

Tea and cakes were most welcome on a hot day, the cakes kindly supplied by one of Cyril's neighbours - as payment for his repair of her Jubilee wheelbarrow!

Our route now took us via the M11 and A10/A1123 to Haddenham - now home to Young's who have a modern coach fleet, Scania/Van Hool bodies dominating. Several

interesting vehicles included Scania/Jonckheere double-deck coach 58DAF (E216GNV) and Astromega RIL9458 (owned by a third party). A number of stored vehicles including former Chambers Bedford/Duple Dominant bus A211JDX and privately-owned LYF378/430 (once RF36 and 79 in the London County fleet) attracted interest, as did some vintage agricultural equipment and tractors.

After a brief stop in Haddenham to replenish supplies from the village shop, we continued to Earith and a visit to the premises of Sun Fun. This company has developed out of the provision of coaches for Band transportation and still owns a fleet of coaches fitted out for this purpose. They have diversified into schools work - three double-deckers, Volvo/East Lancs G641/2GHF and former Hong Kong tri-axle B10MWA are owned - and into international coach tours, a comprehensive range of European tours being offered in 2012.

59 DAF of Youngs of Haddenham which, confusingly, is not a DAF but a Scania - a K112TRS/Jonckheere Jubilee, new to Mercer of Grimsargh in 1988.





Volvo Citybus/Alexander **F50 ACL** was one of a pair new in 1989 to Great Yarmouth Transport which subsequently passed to Chambers of Bures and later to Rhondda Buses. Still together after all those years, the pair, F50 and F51 ACL are now in the fleet of **Dews** of Somersham. Former Ramsbottom UDC, Gold Star of St Asaph and Black Prince of Leeds Leyland PD3 FTF 702F stands alongside.

It was just a short ride from Earith to our final visit of the day - Dews of Somersham. Dews have a mixed fleet of buses and coaches and operate a significant number of school contracts. In addition, the small preserved fleet included Bedfords CUT465 (an OWB with post-War body), ABC330K (J2), JFT412X and former Black Prince Leyland PD3 FTF702F (new to Ramsbottom). Bedford VAL/Plaxton UFX360L is a restoration project coming along well. Among the interesting vehicles present were former Delaine Olympians M2OCT and N3OCT, former Great Yarmouth and Chambers F50/51ACL and E153BTO, a Volvo Citybus originally with Derby. Scania/Plaxton Verdes make up a significant proportion of the single deck bus fleet.

After leaving Somersham, we headed south via St Ives and a glimpse of the guided busway; after a short break at Cambridge services on the A14 we continued via the M11 and A120 to Dunmow and Colchester.

An extremely interesting day out and our grateful thanks go to all the operators visited for their hospitality, to our driver Paul Smith of Talisman and Keith Woods for organising the day.

Richard Huggins

The Epping Ongar Railway

The Epping - Ongar bit of the Central Line, which used to be in the top right-hand corner of the tube map, originated as a Great Eastern Railway branch from Loughton. The London Passenger Transport Board had gradually extended the Central Line and this reached Loughton in 1948. An LNER steam shuttle continued to work Loughton - Ongar. Nationalisation saw London Transport take over the (now BR) track and stations, and electrify the section to Epping. Epping - North Weald - Blake Hall - Ongar remained a steam shuttle run on behalf of LT by BR. The line was finally electrified and became part of the Central Line proper in 1957.

Decline set in not long after. Blake Hall station was closed on Sundays in 1966 and altogether in 1981. Even running a reduced service did not prevent mounting losses and the whole line closed on 30 September 1994.

By 2000, the **Epping Ongar Railway Volunteer Society** was formed to take over and restore the line and in 2004, they began a DMU service which lasted until 2007. The following year, ownership passed to the **Epping Ongar Railway**, who, after extensive

track renewals and station renovations, recommenced steam-hauled services on 25th May 2012. These presently run Ongar - North Weald - Coopersale (no alighting here), with the eventual aim being to reach Epping again. The former station building at Blake Hall is now a private residence, and thus, trains run non-stop past the platforms.

A connecting bus service which could only be numbered 339 (and is!) from Epping LUL station to North Weald and Ongar is worked by Roger Wright's **London Bus Company**, generally with RT types through the railway's operating season. (Memo to LBC/ERO: an extension to Brentwood Station would be nice!).

Russell Young's fine shot below shows red RTL1076 (one of the fleet of eleven RTs. RTLs and RMs repatriated from Abegweit Tours in Canada) at North Weald Village on 27th May. More appropriate to the 339 is green RT1700, shown on the back cover.

For times, fares and other info on the EOR, visit: www.eorailway.co.uk/

David Harman



Colchester Publicity News

The following were obtained from the First Travel office in Colchester during mid-May

Essex County Council (picture style timetable leaflet) for 11 dated 6.4.09; 15 dated 6.4.09; 83 dated 6.4.09; 175/275 dated 30.8.11.

Essex County Council (non picture style leaflet) for 50/A/B/C/92 dated 28.8.11; 78/X dated 1.9.08; 105/107/109 dated 29.8.10; 247 dated 01.05.11.

First corporate style leaflet for 88/A dated 6.5.12.

First corporate style 24 page booklet for 61/62 dated 6.5.12; 63 dated 6.5.12.

First corporate overground style leaflet for 67/A dated 28.8.11; 68 dated 6.5.12.

First Braintree Area bus guide, a 38 page booklet dated 6.5.12.

The First leaflet for 88/A, includes ECC services operated by TGM and Regal, but excludes commercial Heddingham journeys; this is of no help to passengers (sorry, customers), as (for example) it appears on Saturday there is no bus from Colchester between 1345 and 1740.

Also obtained, but covered in the Chelmsford item last month were ECC timetable for 9/10; 73; 88/A/B; 105/107/109; First Clacton Area bus guide; First overground leaflet for 64/A/B; 65/66/A; First corporate leaflet for 70/X; 71/A/C; 75/B.

Ian Ransom

Service changes

Arriva Southend

15 Apr 12	200	Sun	Basildon to Lakeside: service renumbered 201(corrected information).
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First Essex

1 Jul 12	351	D	Chelmsford to Brentwood: minor revision to timetable.
	X30	D	Southend to Stansted Airport: route revision for journeys serving Southend Airport.
22 Jul 12	19	D	Clacton to St Osyth Beach: new summer service.

Logic Bus

23 Apr 12	L3	M-S	Harlow to Hammond Street: rerouted by Cheshunt and extended to Cuffley. Reduced to hourly frequency.
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London Bus Company

1 Jul 12	396	SSu	Epping to North Weald: new service operating only on 1st and 7th July only.
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National Express

11 Jun 12	727	D	Norwich to Brighton: revised route and timetable.
	797	D	Cambridge to Brighton: revised route and timetable.
2 Jul 12	497	D	London to Great Yarmouth: revised timetable.

New Horizon Travel

2 Jul 12	77	M-S	Aingers Green to Colchester: revised timetable.
7 Aug 12	127	Sch	Great Oakley to Thorpe-le-Soken: service

	128	Sch	withdrawn. Little Bentley to Thorpe-le-Soken: service withdrawn.
	129	Sch	Walton to Thorpe-le-Soken; service withdrawn.
	130/2	Sch	Walton to Thorpe-le-Soken; service withdrawn.
Regal Busways			
18 Jun 12	16	M-S	Wethersfield to Chelmsford: revised route in Great Bardfield.
2 Jul 12	3	M-S	Southend to Chelmsford: minor revision to timetable.
Stagecoach Cambridge			
10 Jun 12	7	M-S	Saffron Walden to Cambridge: revised route within Cambridgeshire and minor timetable revisions.
TGM Group (Network Colchester)			
18 Jun 12	133	D	Stansted Airport to Colchester University: minor timetable revisions to journeys serving Braintree College (corrected information).
9 Jul 12	1	D	Shrub End to University of Essex: revised timetable with section between Greenstead and University withdrawn. Introduction of service 1A to/from Elm Crescent.
	8/A-C	D	Monkwick to Highwoods: revised timetable.

Paul Harvey (acknowledgements to LOTS, Essex & Hertfordshire County Council, Richard Delahoy & Harlowride)

First

■ FIRST ESSEX BUSES LTD

Acquired vehicles

42447 R447CCV Dennis Dart SLF SFD322BR1VGW11553 Plaxton 9710.7HLB7745 B35F
new 12/97

53121 EO02NFC Optare Solo

53122 EO02NFD Optare Solo

Ex First Eastern Counties Ltd, May 2012 (53121/2 originally First Essex, 42447 new to Western National)

Allocation changes (May 2012)

These are, and always have been, taken from the Company's allocation sheet although these have been in several different formats over the last few months, hence changes in terminology. For operational reasons there may sometimes be discrepancies with the actual situation on the ground.

FG=to/from another First Group company (change of legal ownership); RES=reserve;
Sh=shuttle bus (non PCV)

The following traditional depot codes are used in EBN, although they no longer appear on the company's listings: BN-Basildon; BE-Braintree; CF-Chelmsford; CN-Clacton; CR-Colchester; DT-Harwich; HH-Hadleigh; D/L(D)-Disposal

34610 RES-FG; 42447 FG-CF; 43357 CF-FG; 43358 CF-FG; 43359 CF-FG; 53121 FG-CF; 53122 FG-CF; 53139 CF-RES(CN); 67003 RES(CR)-RES; 67241 RES(CN)-RES(CR); 68000 Ancillary-BE(Sh)

Lance 67003 was taken out of service on 21st May following MOT expiry.

Disposals

31198 to Erith Commercials (scrap) in August 2011

34610 to First Eastern Counties Ltd at Ipswich (covering for accident-damaged 32494)

43357-9 to First Eastern Counties Ltd at Lowestoft

Repaints

Solos 53136/7 have been repainted in the new First Group livery, together with 'Chelmsford City' local names on the sides.

Other

43485 has now lost its West Suffolk College all-over rear advert

43436 now has LED display at the front

Area News - workings and sightings

Route branding indicated [thus]

Rail Replacement

May

6th CR32477/81, HH32883/4/5/7/94, HH33002 on Greater Anglia (Tridents Newbury Park-Shenfield)

13th BE30888 on GA Chelmsford-Colchester

Clacton (CN) & Harwich (DT)

Dart 46440 (N810VOD) is being cannibalised at CN. As at 2nd June Tridents DT32801/4/47 were on loan to CN with CN32850/4 at DT.

May

11th DT32804 on 76, 67003 on 76X

21st DT42937 on 104, CN53138 on 76, Lance 67003 on 103

June

3rd CR32476 on 76 replacing defective Trident DT32801

Colchester (CR)

During the evening of 14th May, St Botolph's Street, Colchester was closed southbound between Osborne Street and St Botolph's Circus for electricity works. Eastbound 61, 64/A & 66/A and southbound 8E & 67 were diverted via Osborne Street, Stanwell Street and Southway.

May

2nd Lance 67003 on 75

3rd CR32484 [61/62] on 64 & 1, CR32485 on 65, CR65534 on 88, CR65576 on 62, Lances 67003 on 67 and 67241 on 76

5th CR62475 [61/62] on 65

9th CR62407 on 88, CR67003 on 75

10th CR32485 on 1, 67003 on 71

11th CR32481 [61/62] on 1, CR65525 on 62;

14th CN43739 at Haven Road depot (CR), CR60757 on 75, CR65654 on 61

15th CR32478 [61/62] on 65



Adam Kelleher was in Chelmsford on 30th May when Solo 53136 in the new livery with Chelmsford City name was launched outside County Hall, and he took these photos. The livery treatment at the rear is interesting. The little 'cared for' logo appears on the side.



16th CR32481 [61/62] on 1
 17th CR32480 [61/62] on 63
 19th CR62407 on 75B, Lance 67003 on 67B
 21st CR32480 [61/62] on 64, CR32483 [61/62] on 75, 65527 in CR depot; 67003 on 103
 23rd CR65551 on 88 (p.m. Yeldham)
 24th CR34304 on 71/71A

Chelmsford (CF) and Braintree (BE)

May

2nd CF42930 on 71/A, CF43360 on BE131, CF66802 on 71/A, CR65539 on 75
 10th CF34284 on 351, CF65626 on 71/A
 11th CF34284 on 42, CF66817 on 70, CF66830 on 71/A
 14th CF66794 on 71/A
 15th CF42922 on 71/A, CF65032 on 36 (07.35 ex SW).
 16th CF66814 on 71/A
 17th Olympian 34310 on 36X (07.27 ex SW), BE30900 on 132
 18th 34310 on 351, CF40737 on 31X, CF40738 on 36, BE43360 on 132, CF66808 on 71/A
 21st 34310 on 42, Step Dart 46158 on 45 (unusual for Saturday), CF66797 on 71/A
 22nd 34310 on 351, CF34284/6 on 42, BE43436 on 70X; CF66808 on 71/A
 23rd BE43360 on 132
 24th Olympian CF34284 on 36X (07.27 ex SW), followed by CF34286 on 07.35 ex SW.
 34284/6 both then on 42 but later on 34284 worked 20.09 ser 36 from South
 Woodham.
 28th CF34284 on 36 (13.39 ex SW), CF34286 on 31, CF43356 & BE43360 on 54, CF53125 &
 CF65028 on 42
 29th CF34286 & BE66807 on 42, CF65031 on 36 (07.35 ex SW and later 19.09 ex SW)
 31st BE43360 on 36 (14.09 ex SW), 46158 on 45

Basildon (BN) & Hadleigh (HH)

As at early June, East Lancs Dart 40778 was being cannibalised at HH. FEC Volvo B7TL 32494 (AU53HKM) was also present for body repairs, following a collision with the canopy of Ipswich Hospital on 19th May.

May

16th Olympian BN34315 on 200, BN42443 on 100
 22nd BN34012 on 100
 23rd BN34011 on 5, BN60811 on 100, BN66827 on 5
 28th BN43848 on 100
 31st BE30901 left BN depot on tow, BN60865 on 8

June

2nd BN31456 on 8, BN34012 & BN65691 on 5, BN34301 on 200, BN41239 on 100,
 BN66805 on 8
 8th BN34011 on 551 (18.45 ex Brentwood - a double deck on 18.15 is quite usual during
 term time)

Sources: Own observations, with many thanks to First Essex and to S Austin, A Bird, S Burden, N Clark, T Clark, J Collins, D Edwards, M Farmer, F406LTW, J Long, J Podgorski, D Pretty, I Ransom, J Salmon, C Sigston, 'Solo', R West, the Essex, East Anglia and British Buses in North America yahoo! groups, Essex Buses Google group, www.bustlists.ontheweb.co.uk, Real Bus News, LOTS, PSV Circle and 'Terminus'.

Reports relating to First Group may be sent by text on 07973 509459, by e-mail to shenfield252@gmail.com or by conventional post. Many thanks to all who do so.

Chris Stewart

Arriva

■ ARRIVA SOUTHEND LTD

Double deck operation at Southend ended on 23rd May with Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties 5934 being transferred to Guildford for further service. It worked service 1 until early/mid afternoon on the 23rd May when it was subbed.

5934 had operated in service with 'Arriva Southend's Last Double Decker' decoration on 19th May.

Olympian 5935 had been transferred to Guildford on 13th May.

The withdrawal of 5934/5 ends unbroken double deck operation by Arriva Southend and its predecessor Southend Corporation Transport beginning with the operation of double deck electric trams in 1901.

Dart SLF 3205 (P205 LKJ) arrived at Southend from Maidstone on 13th May as a replacement for 5935. 3205 had a mid-life refurbishment in 2005, so has a similar interior spec to 3307/8 already at Southend. Previously withdrawn Dart SLF 3421 (P421 HVX) has been reinstated as a replacement for 5934.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Richard Delahoy, Essex Bus y-group

TGM Group

■ NETWORK HARLOW

Dart/Caetano HX04 HUH/K and MCV Evolution AE55 VGL have had red Network Harlow roundels affixed to front, side and rear on their all-white livery.

Optare Solos 2456 and 2473 are further repaints into two tone blue Network Harlow livery.

Optare Solo 2455 (in Network Harlow Livery) unusually worked to Chelmsford on service 59 on 28th May in place of a Versa.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to John Podgorski, Owen Woodliffe and HarlowRide

Hedingham

Transfer of Sudbury depot to Go Ahead associate company Chambers

H.C.Chambers & Son Ltd the traditional family run bus and coach business run from the High Street in Bures has been acquired by the Go Ahead Group, to complement the already purchased Konectbus, Anglian Bus and Hedingham Omnibuses operations in East Anglia.

The entire Chambers operation, fleet of vehicles, drivers and facilities, were transferred over the weekend of 3rd June, totally vacating the Bures site, allowing the possible future redevelopment of the site. After bus operations completed on Saturday 2nd June, during Sunday 3rd, the fleet was moved to its new home in the former Hedingham yard at Meekings Road.

Hedingham's Sudbury allocation of vehicles and workload, which had been severely depleted after the loss of the majority of school contracts this school year have been

redistributed accordingly between the other HO depots, details below.

H.C.Chambers & Son Ltd was founded in 1877 and started with horse drawn buses. Motorised vehicles followed after the First World War and recently the focus has been on bus operation, with routes 753 Colchester - Sudbury - Bury St Edmunds, 84 Colchester - Sudbury and 374 Clare - Bury St Edmunds. The fleet stands at 20 double deckers, one single decker, one minibus and three coaches.

The official announcement of the Go Ahead Group purchase was made after the Jubilee bank holidays on 6th June but operations had ceased from Bures on the night of the 2nd June. The HO depot at Sudbury had lost all references to Hedingham and the Chambers fleet moved in on 3rd June. The "Chambers" name will continue for the foreseeable future according to press reports. As it stood on the first day of operation post-Jubilee celebrations, the Chambers vehicles were reported as running on Hedingham's 'O' licence.

N465 PAP, the Alexander Dash bodied Dart remains in the Bures yard with panels off, as of 5th June. It is believed that ERF recovery vehicle R548 AEG is also still at Bures.

Hedingham SY re-allocations

L243	TY		L366	KN	Service 80 and 17
L291	KN	Suffolk schools	L378	HD	Honeywood schools
L298	HD	Suffolk schools	L380	KN	Service 3
L342	TY	unused			

Loan of vehicles to Anglian Bus

From 22nd May, Darts L334 (V250 BNV) and L344 (P104 OLX) were loaned to Go Ahead Group fellow member, Anglian Bus of Beccles. L334 and L344 have both been used in service out of Beccles with L334 being seen on 580, Diss - Beccles service and L344 seen on 581, Beccles - Gt Yarmouth service. Both vehicles have Anglian Bus vinyls applied to their nearside windscreens and to both mid-side windows to assure users they are Anglian Bus vehicles. The loan coincided with the loan of other group member Konectbus Optare Excel 203 (V203 ENU) as Anglian are apparently short of vehicles as they await Group vehicle cascades. The return date of these vehicles to Hedingham is not known.

Other Allocations

May

L300	KN - HD Service 418.
L334	Anglian Bus, Beccles.
L344	Anglian Bus, Beccles.
L368	KN-TY. (L368 is a TY bus but gets loaned to KN as needed, similar with L371).

General

14th May: There was a fare revision made, with increases applied but also introducing return fares which had not been commonplace in previous years. Changes were also made to child fares (5 to 15) with full fares for 16 and over unless proof of being a student qualifying for lower fares could be made.

L84 attended the Gt Yeldham Bus Museum open day as did ex L304 (L69 UNG), now with a private owner in preservation. Wearing the green livery of previous owner, Gardbus of Bournemouth, the former L304 was previously with Brijan Tours and APL Travel, and attended the Clacton Bus Rally on 3rd June along with L350 representing the current fleet.

Mark Lloyd with thanks to Dave Arnold & Jim Embrey

Henry Christopher Chambers - 1912

Conveyance.—Henry C. Chambers, brake to Colchester, sat. & Sudbury, thurs

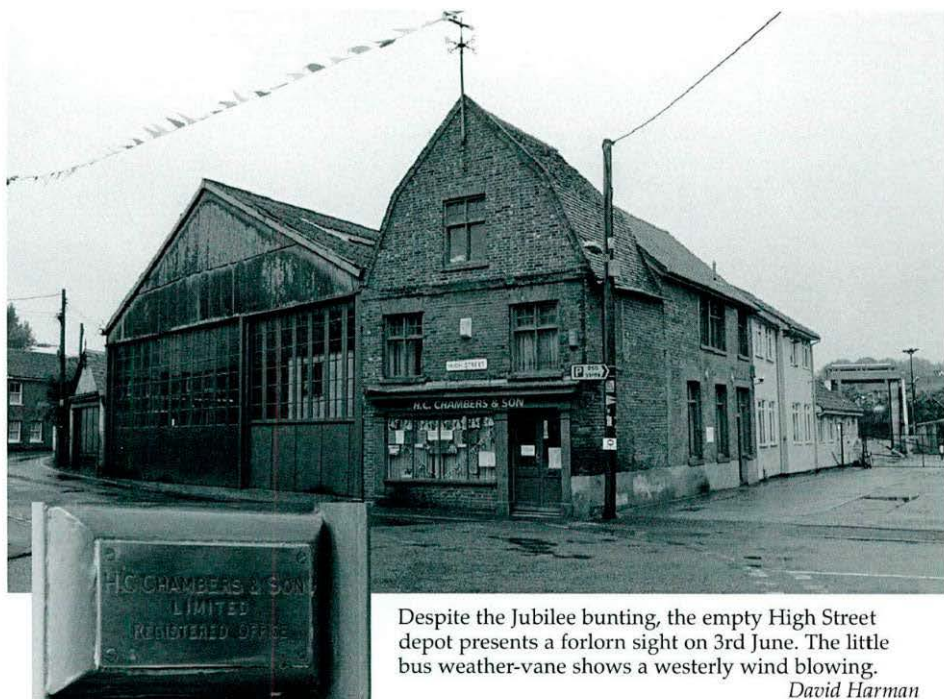
Carrier.—James Shead, from Bures Hamlet to Colchester, tues. thurs. & sat. & to Sudbury, mon

Chambers Henry Christopher & Son,	Hu
saddlers, harness & cart saddle pad	Hu
makers, jobmasters & coal mers	Hu
Chinery Frederick James, grocer	Hu
Coe Felix. cowkeeper	Im

Kelly's Directory of Suffolk, 1912

Although Henry Christopher Chambers was listed as a saddler in *Kelly's* for 1891-2, the entry in the 1912 edition is the earliest reference I can find to the running of a "conveyance" of any description. James Shead's carrier service from Bures Hamlet to Colchester was also in the 1891-2 *Kelly's* and may date back even earlier. *David Harman*

H.C. Chambers & Son Ltd. - 2012



Despite the Jubilee bunting, the empty High Street depot presents a forlorn sight on 3rd June. The little bus weather-vane shows a westerly wind blowing.

David Harman

Fleet at takeover: 2nd June 2012

reg.no.	chassis	body	seats	new	to
N529 LHG	Volvo Olympian	Northern Counties	H48/27F	1996	London Central
N531 LHG	Volvo Olympian	Northern Counties	H48/27F	1996	London Central
N532 LHG	Volvo Olympian	Northern Counties	H48/27F	1996	London Central
P901 RYO	Volvo Olympian	Northern Counties	H47/27F	1997	London Central
P902 RYO	Volvo Olympian	Northern Counties	H47/27F	1997	London Central

<i>reg.no.</i>	<i>chassis</i>	<i>body</i>	<i>seats</i>	<i>new</i>	<i>to</i>
P910 RYO	Volvo Olympian	Northern Counties	H47/27F	1997	London Central
P549 WGT	Volvo Olympian	Northern Counties	H47/29F	1997	London Central
P475 MBY	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H43/29F	1996	Metroline
P484 MBY	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H43/29F	1996	Metroline
P488 MBY	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H43/29F	1996	Metroline
R552 LGH	Volvo Olympian	Northern Counties	H47/27F	1997	London Central
R941 YOV	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H47/29F	1996	London United
R978 KAR	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H78F	1996	Dublin Bus
R987 KAR	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H78F	1996	Dublin Bus
R989 KAR	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H78F	1996	Dublin Bus
R43 LHK	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H78F	1996	Dublin Bus
R49 LHK	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H78F	1996	Dublin Bus
S218 YOO	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H78F	1996	Dublin Bus
S131 RLE	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H43/29F	1998	Metroline
S233 RLH	Volvo Olympian	Alexander	H43/29F	1998	Metroline
P515 UGG	Volvo B10B	Wright Endurance	B51F	1997	Keighley & District
R112 NTA	Mercedes Vario	Alexander	B29F	1998	Stagecoach Devon
M655 KVV	Volvo B10M	Van Hool Alizee	C49Ft	1995	Shearings
BX55 FYH	Mercedes Touro		C49Ft	2006	bought new
BX55 FYJ	Mercedes Touro		C49Ft	2006	bought new

Centrebuss

587 (V355 DLH) a Marshall B25F bodied Dart SLF has been transferred from Corby to Harlow. Dart/MCV 545 (AE55 VGD) has been transferred to Huddersfield.

Dart/Marshall S522 KFL has been repainted from the former Trustybus livery.

LOTS / Owen Woodliffe

Ensignbus

DEALER STOCK MOVEMENTS

Vehicles in

Astons Coaches	YJ56 AUA/C/E/F/H	Solo
	CN05 DZK	Volvo B12B Plaxton ex Veolia 76005
	YN04 LWT	Solo
Go-Ahead North East	R254/265LGH	Volvo Olympian N Counties ex 3896/3907
	X507-9 WRG	Dennis Dart SLF ex 507-9
London United	V803/ 811KAG	Dennis Dart SLF Plaxton
	T349/54/6-7/64/70PRH	
Manchester Comm Trans	SN51SZY	Dennis Dart SLF Plaxton
Metrobuss	R745BMY	Dennis Dart SLF ex 245
Metroline	T97/98/102/113/128 KLD	Trident Plaxton President ex TP30/1/TP2, TP13/28
	T133/9/41-3 CLO	TP33/9/41/2/3
	V752/ 755/6/7/62 HBY	TP52/5/6/7/62

OTT, Ramsgate	E754 UKR	Metrobus
Reading Buses	MX56 HYA	AD SLF Dart ex 610
RH Transport	D938 NDA	Metrobus
	GVF 954T	Fleetline
	W996 JNF	Mercedes Benz 814 ex 202
Stagecoach London	Y511/371/6/85 NHK	Trident Alexander 400 ex 17375/71/6/85

Vehicles out

Aintree Coaches	T38 KLD	Trident Alex 400 ex Ensign 908
Central Buses, Birmingham	MX56 HYA	Alexander Dennis Dart ex Reading Buses 610
Croydon Coaches	S101 EKG	Dennis Dart SLF ex LDP101
Holloway, Scunthorpe	P719 JND	Olympian
	MB02 BLU	SLF/Caetano ex Blubird 16
Holmeswood Coaches, Lancs	YJ56 AUE/F	Solo
RH Transport, Witney, Ox	T309 SMV	ex Metrobus 309 SLF Alex 200
	T407 LGP	ex GNE Dart SLF Caetano ex 8277
Rotala Group	YJ06 YPP/R, YJ56 AUA/C/H Solo	
	CN05 DZF	ex Veolia 76005 Volvo B12B Plaxton
Suffolk County Council	R413 LHK	ex Dublin Olympian 97-D-D362
	M686TDB	ex Stagecoach Dragon
Tates Travel, Barnsley	SN51 SZY	Dart Plaxton
Travel De Courcey, Coventry	X285/286 NNO	Trident Alex 400 ex Stagecoach 17285/6
Yellow Buses	MX07 OWU	Enviro 200 ex Meridian Line
	YX09 HZF	Enviro 200 ex Veolia 906
Trident X308 NNO:	City Direct, Galway, Eire.	
Metrobus E754 UKR:	Delta Force Paintball, Send, Guildford.	
Olympian S766 SVU:	Mike Lawrenson, Preston	
Trident V755 HBY:	Adrian Sunderland, South Chailey, East Sussex	
Scania N710 EUR:	T W Busby Farms, Stafford	

RM2151: Coach Services, Thetford.

W656 SNN ex Nottingham 656 Trident E Lancs: Longleat Safari Park

Darts V803/811 KAG, T349/54/6-7/64/70 PRH: Geoff Ripley for scrap.

Volvo B10M HJZ 4034, Tridents T202 CLO, V314 GLB: Shelton Motors, Cambs, for scrap.

Vehicles on hire

Tridents V136 MEV and X397 NNO to Brylaine Coaches, Lincs.

Tridents V152 MEV and X396 NNO to Peoples Bus, Liverpool.

Dart V435 KGF to P&O Ferries, Dover.

Darts V436/7 KGF to Regal Busways, Chelmsford.

Dart T41 KLD and Trident LY02 OAX have been returned from SDR Coach Help and

Sullivans Buses respectively.

Mark Lloyd with thanks to Ross Newman

■ ENSIGN BUS CO. LTD.

Acquired vehicles

143 X343 NNO Dennis Trident / Alexander 400 ex Stagecoach 17343
744 Y344 FJN Dennis Dart SLF / Alexander 200 ex Stagecoach 34344
774 Y374 FJN Dennis Dart SLF / Alexander 200 ex Stagecoach 34340
All converted to single door and repainted in fleet livery.

981 T81 KLD Dennis Trident / Plaxton President ex Metroline TP11
998 T98 KLD Dennis Trident / Plaxton President ex Metroline TP31
913 T113 KLD Dennis Trident / Plaxton President ex Metroline TP13
928 T128 KLD Dennis Trident / Plaxton President ex Metroline TP28
All in red for short-term rail and Olympic commitments.

Vehicles sold

720 R620 VEG Dart/Marshall to Valero Energy, Pembroke Dock.
908 T38 KLD Trident/Alexander 400 (rail replacement fleet) to Aintree Coaches.

Late news

In the early evening of 9th June, a fire in the Wright Gemini hybrid, 501 (PIJ 601) broke out, it is thought in the battery compartment. As the bus could not be started, Ross Newman and Ensign staff had to resort to pushing it as far away as they could from parked buses and the depot buildings (containing the heritage fleet and other vehicles). Unfortunately, strong winds and a 45 minute delay before the fire service arrived meant that the blaze took hold rapidly and also spread to a sales stock ex-Dublin Olympian.

By 20:55 the fire was extinguished, but both deckers are understood to have been completely destroyed. Fortunately, no-one was injured, and quick thinking avoided what could have been a far greater catastrophe.

Mark Lloyd with thanks to Ross Newman, Essex y-group



Former Go North East Dart/Caetano V437 KGF on hire to Regal Busways from Ensign (dealer): Brentwood 1st June. Chris Stewart

Regal Busways

Darts 602 (YN04 PZZ) and 605 /6 (W133/6 WGT) are recent repaints into the red livery.

Withdrawn Darts K955 PBG, 508 (K414 FHJ), 505/40 (J105/40 DUV) have been sold to Maldon Metals for scrap in April. *LOTS*

Roadrunner / Olympus

Dart BU05 HDV is now in white/blue fleet livery.

Dart/Plaxton V195 ERG has been noted working Roadrunner service 255, with Olympus as legal owner and Olympian Coaches fleetnames. *LOTS / Owen Woodliffe*

S&M Coaches

The Southend seafront service 67 continues to run at weekends using part open-top Olympian G551VBB (see timetable below). On the weekend of the Southend Airshow, May 26/27, it was diverted away from the seafront to run via Clifftown Road, Scrattton Road, Cliffs Pavilion, Westcliff Station and First Avenue and a very unexpected second bus was drafted in to run duplicates, an open top MCW Metroliner once a National Express double deck coach, AXZ 5722 (ex A112KFX, MCW103G), hired from M&I Coaches.

Richard Delahoy

EXPERIENCE
southend on sea

Runs Saturday, Sunday,
Public & School Holidays

Operates Daily
Monday 2nd April 12 – Friday 13th April 12
Monday 23rd July 12 – Friday 31st August 12
Saturday, Sundays & Public Holidays
Saturday 6th April 12 – Sunday 30th September 12

67 Southend Town Centre – The Pier – Seafront – Chalkwell Station – Leigh Cocker Sheds – Leigh Station – Leigh Church

Southend Travel Centre Stop G	10.00	10.30	11.00	12.00	*****	14.00	15.00	*****	17.00	18.00	19.00
Lucy Road for Seaway Coach Park	10.03	10.33	11.03	12.03	*****	14.03	15.03	*****	17.03	18.03	19.03
Southend Kursaal, Sea Life Adventure	10.06	10.36	11.06	12.06	*****	14.06	15.06	*****	17.06	18.06	19.06
Southend Pier, Adventure Island Arrive	10.08	10.38	11.08	12.08	*****	14.08	15.08	*****	17.08	18.08	19.08
Southend Pier, Adventure Island Depart	10.13	10.43	11.13	12.13	13.13	14.13	15.13	16.13	17.13	18.13	19.13
Rossi Restaurant, The Arches	10.15	10.45	11.15	12.15	13.15	14.15	15.15	16.15	17.15	18.15	19.15
Chalkwell Shelter	*****	*****	11.18	12.18	13.18	14.18	15.18	16.18	17.18	18.18	19.18
Chalkwell C2C Station	*****	*****	11.22	12.22	13.22	14.22	15.22	16.22	17.22	18.22	19.22
Leigh On Sea Rail Station	*****	*****	11.25	12.25	13.25	14.25	15.25	16.25	17.25	18.25	19.25
Leigh Broadway & Church	*****	*****	11.30	12.30	13.30	14.30	15.30	16.30	17.30	18.30	19.30

67 Leigh Church – Leigh Station – Leigh Cocker Sheds – Chalkwell Station – Seafront – The Pier – Southend Town Centre

Leigh Broadway & Church	*****	*****	11.30	12.30	13.30	14.30	15.30	16.30	17.30	18.30	
Old Leigh Cocker Sheds	*****	*****	11.32	12.32	13.32	14.32	15.32	16.32	17.32	18.32	
Chalkwell C2C Station	*****	*****	11.36	12.36	13.36	14.36	15.36	16.36	17.36	18.36	
Chalkwell Shelter	*****	*****	11.40	12.40	13.40	14.40	15.40	16.40	17.40	18.40	
Rossi Restaurant, The Arches	10.20	10.45	11.45	12.45	13.45	14.45	15.45	16.45	17.45	18.45	
Southend Pier, Adventure Island	10.22	10.50	11.50	12.50	13.50	14.50	15.50	16.50	17.50	18.50	
Southend Kursaal, Sea Life Centre	10.25	10.55	11.53	*****	13.53	14.53	*****	16.53	17.53	18.53	
Southend Town Centre Southchurch Rd	10.28	10.58	11.58	*****	13.58	14.58	*****	16.58	17.58	18.58	

A Rainy Jubilee ~ Clacton Bus Rally ~ 3rd June



Your carriage awaits ... Ensign's Leeds PD3 5280 NW, working the Brentwood to Clacton feeder, pauses in a damp Crossways, Shenfield to pick up an esteemed Editor ... wherever he is ...

Today's forecast: rain, prolonged at times ... RS658 (KVF658E), Eastern Counties RESL now owned by Eastern Transport Collection, at Clacton Station. (both Chris Stewart) ...





... especially in the morning ... Eastern National 3000 (CPU 979G) stands in Maldon High Street en route for Clacton. (Ian Banks) ...

... with only a brief let-up at lunchtime ... New Horizon Volvo B6/Wright X976 CNO with Frinton local service 13 route branding above the window. (Ken Coldwell) ...





... before more of the same in the afternoon ... Former Eastern National City 400 long wheelbase Olympian coach 4505 (B693 BPU) now with M&E Coaches of Rochford ...

(David Harman)

... so, advice from the weather centre is to take an umbrella ... AJN 825 and Paul Ashman's UFM 53F at Weeley (AJN complete with Jubilee flags) present a brave sight at Weeley.

(Chris Stewart)



E&OE Department

Sixty Years in Basildon (EBN576) *Peter Carr* and *John Rugg* have kindly corrected a couple of errors in my 'Basildon 60' article. The pub visible behind Patten's Dennis EV6784 is of course the 'Swan', not the 'Castle'. The LWL is crossing Upper Mayne, not Nether Mayne. Fleet numbers 1306/7 were CJN321/2 (not CHJ) and 1326 (DHJ612) in the 1954 allocation was a K6B not K5G. *Chris Stewart*

The 251 ... (EBN577) The date of the photo of City LT18 (CYO 190) is given as 1955. The vehicle carries the ENOC fleet-number plate, allocated in July 1954 and was sold to AMCC in January 1955 (although I have seen December 1954 quoted). However, the foliage on the trees shows October 1954 as the latest possible date, so the photo must have been taken between July and October 1954. *Peter Carr*

Left at Wilson's Corner from the Ingrave Road direction would of course take you *west* for Romford, Ilford and Wood Green, and not east (for Shenfield, Chelmsford etc).

David Harman

BD Depot Lingo ... and other recollections

(see EBN577) *Doug Brown's* time at Brentwood depot must have overlapped with my two summer stints and he has written with some corrections and additional detail. Whilst I deliberately left out some names so as to protect the innocent (or in most cases, the guilty), most were omitted due to the defects of memory. It does say something for the friendly spirit at BD, that I can recall many of the staff, especially the 'characters', far better than I can the buses.

So, over to Doug ... (my comments in italics)..

... Starting at the top, the **LTS** was Jim Gristwood. He had a deputy, Victor Malden (*he interviewed me and I remember him as a kindly, ex-City man*), and last in the pecking order was Derek Howlett, who married the typist, name forgotten. (*Those were the days: three chiefs plus a typist, to run a bus depot ...!*)

Ken Taylor and **Doug Davies** were the schedulers (*and truth to tell, they really ran the depot*).

Jumpers: Albert Wood with the ruddy complexion, Arthur Jones, Leslie Embury

and Ernie Penial. There was no 'Alfred'. (*memory playing tricks - but four inspectors - I never knew that!*)

When Doug was there, my regular driver, Ron Birch was a conductor. Ron's driver was Mick Holder, and Doug recounts a cautionary tale regarding Mick ...

"... As a union rep, I had to call Mick to order for using the bus as a taxi - dropping passengers off at their house. In the event of an accident he would have to pay. For insurance reasons you only pick up and drop off at bus stops. The expected happened and Mick asked for union support. I had to tell him he was on his own. He spent the rest of his life paying compensation ..."

Disciplinary notice: 303, 606, 909? It was none of these - actually a 505A. (*well, it was a one in nine guess!*). I got one for running early when in fact I was on holiday. I gave Jim a hard time on this one. (*All mine must still be in the out-tray at New Writtle Street*).

Pratty's: Harry Pratt was a driver for EN when he bought his first coach, a 41 seat

Bedford, JEF 325. He later bought JEF 326, and one of these had a chinese (reversed) gearbox. He had two sons, Jim and John. Jim became County Coaches, and John, Brentwood Coaches. I worked part time for Harry doing pub darts matches.

Jock Ferguson was the Scottish driver; **Paddy** Flynn the Irish conductor; Cdr. **Ernie** Deller was the singing busman and the **M-----s** were Drv. and Cdr. Morse The **P-----s** were Drv. and Cdr. Nelson; Mrs was Polish but Mr was English.

The (in)famous Drv. **Lightfoot** was made a jumper because he became a union man. I was offered a jumpers job but refused, telling the LTS I crawled to no one.

I got out of EN as I could see the way things were going. One day, a man named Roy Scott (later of Lee-Roy Coaches) bought a Bedford VAL six-wheeler to the depot for an MOT. He asked me to work for him and said I could have that coach. I was hooked! It was the best decision I ever made as I then spent nearly 20 years as a coach driver!

Doug Brown

More from Doug another time. Meanwhile, as we have a little space, the first of some recollections of BD 'characters' mentioned.

Ernie Deller, the singing busman

Ernie was very absent-minded. He would put his box and Setright down in the canteen and forget to pick them up, or walk out with someone's else's. A cafe in Ongar frequented by crews had a sign on the back of the door reading: "don't forget your box, Ernie", as he had left it there on numerous occasions. As the Setright was a valuable item and conductors had to reimburse the company in the event of loss, he took to wearing his at all times, even in the canteen.

The shortage of drivers was then so acute, that Ernie was persuaded to train for a PSV. Prior to his lesson one morning, in order to be helpful, Ernie decided to move the tuition bus out of the depot shed unsupervised. In those days there was no permanent driver

trainer; an ordinary KSW was used which had a removable window behind the cab, through which the instructor (one of the inspectors) shouted instructions above the roar of the Gardner. A cream board (signwritten 'in-house' as virtually every other sign at the depot was) with "L - Driver Under Instruction" was hung over the radiator, and another stuck to the rear platform window using rubber suckers.

Unfortunately, in manoeuvring the KSW out, Ernie forgot about the angled roof support girders which jutted from the side. The KSW and said girders conspired to meet in unholy wedlock with consequent damage to both and that was the end of Ernie's driving career. He was not the slightest bit disappointed and quite content to remain a conductor.

As I said before, he occasionally sang and played the guitar in Country & Western style in the canteen, and newcomers at the depot were encouraged to "ask him for a tune", whereupon he would produce a packet of the well-known cough sweet and offer them round. This always brought applause and laughter no matter how many times it was repeated. In defence of the crews, this was a time when you had to make your own entertainment.

However, Ernie's chief claim to fame, and indeed his nickname, came about because of a haunting melody entitled "*Hev you got a loight, boy?*" which was in what was then called the 'Hit Parade'. This, in truth, excruciating ditty (listen to it on *Youtube* at your peril!) was the work of "The Singing Postman", a GPO postie from Wroxham in Norfolk, who achieved fleeting fame as a result. Ernie could render a passable version of the novelty number, and this led to a campaign being mounted to launch a career for him in the music industry. Alas, the record-buying public was not quite ready for "The Singing Busman", so Ernie was destined to remain on EN's books at BD for the foreseeable future. To his credit, he took it all in good heart.

David Harman

Arriva Southend withdraws its last double-decker

Mid May saw Arriva withdraw the final two double deckers based at Southend, when Northern Counties bodied Volvo Olympians 5934/5 (P934/5 MKL) were transferred to Guildford for further service there.

Double deckers have been an enduring part of the Southend bus scene and of course, deckers remain in the town on stage services with First and Stephensons, plus occasional appearances by Fords of Althorne (every other Thursday, to be exact) and contract operators. In recent years double deckers have formed only a small part of the Arriva fleet, and indeed latterly the same was true of First's south east Essex operations until the cascade in of ex London Tridents. Arriva is the successor to Southend Corporation Transport, which started operations with double deck trams in 1901. Double deck trolleybuses first appeared in 1928 (Garrett 104) and were followed by double deck motor buses in 1937 (AEC Regents 157-60), in the case of both types of traction, having been preceded by single deckers.

With the move to easy access, low floor buses, there were hopes that Southend would retain a substantial double deck contingent when 15 Dennis Tridents came in 2000 to supplement the existing new and second-hand Olympians and second-hand Dominators and oust the final Fleetlines. However, the financial performance of the company could not support the high depreciation cost of the Tridents and they soon moved on elsewhere within Arriva.

Low bridges have dominated the selection of double deck types throughout SCT and AS's history. The pedestrianisation of Southend High Street in the 1970s eliminated one obstacle but since the 1955 Coordination Agreement, the Great Eastern railway line

has had a major influence on vehicle policy, with low bridges in Hall Rochford, Rochford (previously route 8A, now unserved), Rectory Road, Hawkwell (route 8) and Hockley Station (7). Whilst full height deckers could be used elsewhere, for fleet commonality and flexibility, the aim has been to run a fully low height fleet in Southend. Today many provincial operators have used cascaded ex London buses to provide low floor deckers (as with First's Tridents at Hadleigh, for example) but TfL specifications dictate full height buses and hence they couldn't be used on some core Arriva Southend operations. In any event, apart from some school peak journeys, loadings do not require deckers and the greater number of accessible seats in a single decker are welcomed by many passengers.

Will double deckers return to Arriva Southend one day? Who knows, but for now, the fleet is entirely composed of single deck, low floor buses. AS does of course have deckers at Grays depot on TfL service 370 and these are on the same operator's licence as Southend but have no connection with the operations in Southend.

There were a number of false alarms for what was to be the actual last day of operation. 5935 ran for the final time on Saturday May 12th; 5934 was decorated the following Saturday afternoon (19th) which was treated as the "farewell day" but in the event 5934 did remain in use until Wednesday 23rd when it too was collected by Guildford depot staff.

These photos capture something of the final few days of operation.

Richard Delahoy



With commemorative notices in the upper deck windows, 5934 pauses at Southend University Hospital on May 19; services 7/8 double run here but serve different stops according to the direction of travel. *Richard Delahoy*

Interior top deck view, 5934, showing traditional tubular-framed seats.

Richard Delahoy





With commemorative notices in the upper deck windows, 5934 stands at Hockley, Spa on May 19. *Richard Delahoy*

Hockley Station bridge on route 7 shows again why low-height buses are essential in Southend; 5934 eases underneath and shows how the road dips steeply on either side, explaining why the signs display a 13' 6" restriction, reflecting the headroom available for the longest vehicles on the road. *Richard Delahoy*





By far the oddest working of the Olympians in their last few weeks occurred on May 9th when due to a vehicle shortage, 5935 was allocated to the obscure Wednesdays only service 10 from Paglesham to Rayleigh, seen here at the Paglesham terminus at the Plough & Sail pub when the bus has to reverse as the road is a dead end. *Malcolm McKinnon*

Illustrating the tight clearances under Rectory Road bridge at Hawkwell, 5934 eases under on May 19; traffic lights here protect against unexpected encounters under the bridge and on the right angle bend beyond. *Ian Banks*





Then and now (1) Rectory Road, Hawkwell is not only a low bridge, signed at 13' 6", but also single track with a right angle bend and hence is traffic light controlled. Fleetline 378, GHJ378L, seen on March 3rd, 1985 contrasts with ...



Then and now (2) One bridge that does not present an obstacle to deckers is Warners Bridge near Southend Airport. Our "then" view from 1956 shows new Leyland PD2/Massey lowbridge 287, passing roadworks on the bridge in connection with the electrification of the Southend Victoria line ...



.... 5934 squeezing under on Saturday 19th May. *both Richard Delahoy*



.... Contrasting, 5934 passes the same spot on May 19th.
Richard Delahoy collection/Richard Delahoy

