

ESSEX BUS NEWS

Issue 528
April 2008



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

serving Essex since 1964

www.essexbus.org.uk

Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A calendar year subscription is £19.50 by First Class post, 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 Shoebury Road
Southend-on-Sea SS1 3TT
richard@signal-training.com

Replacements for missing or defective EBNs are available from Richard.

TIMETABLE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Join this scheme to receive Essex County Council timetable books and updates. Please contact:

Derek Stebbing, 'Conifers',
Thorpe Road, Weeley, Clacton, C016 9JJ
derekstebbing@yahoo.com

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PUBLICATION SALES

All orders for publications should be sent to:

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

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

B/W PHOTO SALES

All orders for photos from lists enclosed with EBN should be sent to:

Lyn Watson
c/o Barrons Chartered Accountants
Monometer House, Rectory Grove,
Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 2HN

Prints of specific EN (and predecessor) vehicles can also be supplied; email with requirements:
lyn@barrons-bds.com

YOUR REPORTS AND OBSERVATIONS

Members reports, quality photos (prints or slides) and original articles are always welcome. Please send them direct to the relevant Sub-Editor.

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.

ESSEX BUS NEWS

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Dates for your diary

■ EBN PRESS DATES

<i>For inclusion in EBN dated</i>	<i>reports should reach Editors by</i>	<i>planned despatch date</i>
May	3 May	22 May
June	31 May	19 June
July	28 June	17 July

Please note that the planned despatch date may change for all sorts of reasons. The actual 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 only be obtained from the Membership Secretary (address opposite).

■ ROCHFORD MEETINGS

Meetings take place in the **Committee Room** (upstairs), **Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford** (the old railway goods shed, adjacent to Rochford station). There is a large free car park and *one Great Eastern* trains & *Arriva Southend* services 7/8 stop nearby. Doors open at 19:15 for an informal chat, with the main talk or show from 20:00 to 21:45. Drinks are normally available. All members and guests are very welcome. £1 donation towards room hire, please. Prints, slides and digital photographs can all be shown. *Richard Delahoy*

- ▶ **Tuesday 13 May** - *Chris Stewart* will present the second part of his illustrated review of EN's depots & bus stations
- ▶ **Tuesday 10 June** - *Owen Woodliffe* will present a slide show, '**Down Memory Lane** (from the '60's and 70's).
- ▶ **Tuesday 15 July** - in place of a meeting, there will be an evening study tour of the **Kent Fastrack** system (see booking form in March EBN).

The autumn season will commence in September at a new venue, following a swingeing increase in the fees charged by Freight House. Meetings may need to change to a different day in the month - details will be given once the new venue is booked.

■ COLCHESTER MEETINGS

Meetings take place in the downstairs room (except as indicated) 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 19:30 for an informal chat, with the main talk or show from 20:00 to 22:00. £1 donation towards room hire, please. Slides or digital photos are preferable, but prints can also be shown. The print projector has now been repaired after the bulb blowing at the December meeting. We have also acquired an unused Novamat slide projector to supplement the current one which has been repaired after recent problems. *Dave Arnold*

cover: This month we turn the clock back 40 years to the bitter 40-day strike by **Southend Corporation** drivers and conductors. The dispute had escalated from an overtime & rest day working ban into an all-out strike after operation of service 17 was sub-contracted to **Super Coaches** of Upminster. Here HUH 39, an ex Western Welsh Leyland Tiger Cub, stands at the Temple Sutton terminus of the 17. Note the specially produced destination blind. The strike is the subject of our feature article this month and a historic shot like this is a fitting way to introduce colour to *Essex Bus News* for the first time in our 24 year history. *Paul Bateson*

- ▶ **Friday 9 May** - slide show by *Richard Delahoy*, "**20 years ago Part 2**"
 - ▶ **Friday 13 June** - to be advised
 - ▶ **Tuesday 24 June** - evening visit to **Talisman Coachlines** - see overleaf
 - ▶ **Friday 11 July *** - slide show by *Dave Arnold*, "**2007**"
 - ▶ **Wednesday 23 July** - visit to see the Crossleys at Worminford.
 - ▶ **Friday 8 August *** - *Andy Baker* (of the Cambridge Omnibus Society) ~ a photo talk on the history of **Barton** of Chilwell.
- * in upstairs room
- ▶ **Friday 12 September** - to be advised
 - ▶ **Friday 10 October** - TBA by *Fred Lawrance*.
 - ▶ **Friday 14 November** - slide show by *Chris Stewart*.
 - ▶ **Friday 12 December** - slide show by *Gary Sharpe*.

■ RALLIES, OPEN DAYS, ETC

- ▶ **Sunday 4 May: Ipswich to Felixstowe Historic Vehicle Run**, Ipswich Transport Museum, Suffolk. www.ipswichtransportmuseum.co.uk

■ TOURS

- ▶ **Saturday 21 June ~ The Long(est) Day Out ~ Stephenson's / Excel Depot Tour**
See booking form in March EBN ~ please photocopy, complete and return to
Ian Ransom, 34 Donald Way, Chelmsford, CM2 9JE, or by e-mail to
Ianandsally@bigfoot.com.

- ▶ **Tuesday 24 June ~ Talisman Evening Visit**

We are once again pleased to be able to run an evening visit to Talisman, with our sincere thanks to them for making this possible. The evening will commence at Colchester North Station (1900) from where a vehicle from the Talisman fleet will depart for a visit to this operators premises in Great Bromley. After a depot visit including an opportunity for photographs, we will depart for a short tour of rural Essex, before returning to Colchester North Station (before 2200). The fare for this tour is £5 and will once again be in support of Essex Air Ambulance. If you wish to book, please send notification to

Ian Ransom, 34 Donald Way, Chelmsford, CM2 9JE, or by e-mail to
Ianandsally@bigfoot.com.

Please note there is **no** booking form for this tour - please pay on the night

- ▶ **Tuesday July 15 ~ evening study tour of the Kent Fastrack system**. This is a free event but **pre-booking is essential**. Please photocopy, complete and return the booking form in March EBN.

Welcome to new members

We are delighted to welcome the following new members who have recently joined the Group:

970 D Flatman, Leigh on Sea
971 R P Green, Folkestone (rejoined)

EBN ~ back issues

The Group has a limited supply of back issues of Essex Bus News and we are pleased to offer members the opportunity to read what was happening to Essex operators in the turbulent years since deregulation. Initially we are only disposing of full year sets. We have one

complete run from 1987 onwards; from 2004 we have further year sets, plus extra ones for 1998, 1999 & 2002. We would prefer to sell a long run of dates in one go rather than odd years in isolation. If you would like to expand your collection, please contact Richard Delahoy as soon as possible, before these go on sale on our sales stand - richard@signal-training.com or write to **272 Shoebury Road, Southend on Sea, SS1 3TT** (with an SAE), listing the years you are interested in. Individual years are £5 each plus carriage but with a substantial discount for a bulk purchase!

75 years of service in Essex - 1930-2005

Chelmsford Travel and Visitor Information Centre (located at Chelmsford Bus Station) are selling this publication, written by Geoff Dodson, at half price: £3.50. They can be contacted on 01245 283400 or 01245 263859 for availability.

Jonathan Thompson

The North Essex Transport Group / The NEST

The group was formed by enthusiasts to seek and secure premises where they could store and display their collections of buses, historic road vehicles, ex-military vehicles and some railway rolling stock. Premises have now been found at The Hunnable Estate, Toppesfield Road, Great Yeldham, North Essex.

A variety of groups are involved in storing and restoring vehicles on the site, with both road and rail represented.

To finance the project the group is offering secure undercover accommodation for double-deck buses etc. The group plans to form a company with limited liability with the eventual aim of registering the site as a Museum of Transport in Essex, open to the general public.

Anyone wishing to view the site with the possible intention of making use of the storage facilities, should contact the following:

Chairman: John Russell Little Beck Cottage, 1 Clare Road, Tilbury Juxta Clare, Halstead, Essex C09 4JS; 01787 237084; fax: 01787 237549; john.nest@uwclub.net

Secretary: Mick Northfield:
01702 545034; mobile: 07979 897321; micknorthfield@aol.com

Friends of the Group Co-ordinator: Les Phillipson, 40 Park Homes, Church Road, Gosfield, Halstead, Essex C09 1UG; 01787 477328.

Stop Press

As we went to press, it was announced on Monday April 7th that Stansted based Excel Passenger Logistics Ltd, along with Excel Gatwick and Manchester based Flight Delay Services, had been sold to Arriva for an undisclosed sum. It is understood that the businesses will continue under their existing management as stand-alone operations within the TGM division of Arriva.



Network Colchester moved all operations to a new depot in Grange Way on the Whitehall Industrial Estate in Old Heath, to the east of the town, over Easter, vacating the historic premises in Magdalen Street that date back to the earliest days of Colchester Corporation Transport. The new premises consist of an open yard, with offices at one end and the workshops/wash/fuel pumps at the other. Buses enter at the far end of the yard, by the workshop building, and are parked up in lines,





reflecting the types of buses used route by route.

These shots were taken by **Richard Delahoy** on Saturday April 5th after the morning run out, hence the lack of buses. Contrast with Magdalen Street the same day, with the doors shut - for good. The Colchester coat of arms still sits on the walls of the old office block, now more than a bit tarnished. Will it be saved when the old depot is demolished?



Talisman afloat

(See last month's cover)

When the high speed ferry service between Harwich and the Hook of Holland, Stena Line returned to day/night sailing using *Stena Hollandica* with a Dutch crew, and *Stena Britannica* with an English crew.

Both were despatched to a German shipyard for work to extend their length. At Harwich International Port, a new passenger walkway was needed to accommodate the extra length. This was built in Spain and took a long while to be completed. In the meantime, passengers could only leave the ship by the car deck once it was empty. This meant that train connections to London were sometimes missed.

Thus, Stena and the Port asked if Talisman could supply a double-decker to take foot passengers off the ship. In order for this to work, the bus had to travel over to Holland, so that it would be on the ship for passengers to board whilst the car deck was being unloaded. Then the bus would come

disembark and drop the passengers at the entrance for customs. On some nights, the bus would do a second or third run.

Atlantean RVW 90W was initially used when the job started in June last year, and sometimes would be unloaded and parked on the quayside in Holland during the day. It was replaced by Olympian KTY44Y as its 85 seating was more useful.

During the Christmas and New Year period the ships swap over so that the crews get to be at home over the holiday period. This means that the buses have been used on both ships. The Megga Dekkas even got in on the act, and also when a group of 226 Dutch students came over for the weekend in London. The coaches used were driven onto the top car deck and loaded there.

The walkway was finally commissioned and use of buses was no longer required after Monday 18th February.

Paul Smith

Publicity News

New A4 timetables from **Essex County Council** are South East Essex and Southend dated January 2008, South Essex dated January 2008, West and North West Essex dated January 2008, Central Essex dated March 2008 and North East Essex dated March 2008. These all have the same photo cover (but with different colour backgrounds for each area), featuring two bus passengers.

For the record, we appear to have missed the ECC issued timetables for South East Essex and Southend dated September 2007, South Essex dated October 2007, West and North West Essex dated September 2007, Central Essex dated October 2007 and North East Essex dated October 2007.

A "Maldon District Links Bus Timetables and Route Map" (FWT 14.3.07) was issued in April 2007 which has only just come to light.

Hertfordshire County Council have issued March 2008 editions of Area Travel Guides 6 (Hertford and the Lea Valley) and 7 (Bishop's Stortford and Royston) whilst a 2008 edition of the "Come and Visit the Lea Valley Regional Park" map is now available.

Ensignbus have issued *Bus Times* No.1, dated 29th March, a glossy, full-colour, 24 page A5 booklet incorporating the changes taking place from that date.



Ian Ransom, with thanks to David Harman and Ian Taylor

Service Changes

Arriva East Herts & Essex

5 April 08 724/5 D Harlow to Heathrow Airport minor early morning timetable adjustments. The 0613 (MF) and 0623 (Sat) from Hatfield to Harlow renumbered from 724 to 725.

Ensign

17 March 08 X80 D Bluewater to Chafford Hundred/Tilbury revised Mon to Fri timetable to operate hourly.

29 March 08 22 D Grays to Aveley new service replacing Arriva 373.

44 M-S Lakeside to Orsett revised timetable

55 M-S Grays to Ockendon Station withdrawn between Belhus Derwent Parade and Ockendon Station. To operate clockwise loop at Belhus Estate. Withdrawn between Grays and Lakeside. (updated information)

66 M-S Aveley to Tilbury Civic Square withdrawn between Usk Road and Lakeside.(updated information)

73 D Tilbury to Lakeside/Upminster withdrawn between Lakeside and Upminster. Sunday service withdrawn.

80 Sun Tilbury to Chafford Hundred new service.

83 M-S Lakeside to Brentwood Road South revised timetable.

X80 D Bluewater to Chafford Hundred/Tilbury to operate daily between Chafford Hundred to Bluewater via Lakeside.

First

4 May 08 65 D Highwoods to Stanway minor timetable alterations to Mon to Fri morning peak service to improve reliability.

103/4 M-S Colchester to Harwich revised timetable to increase running time to improve reliability.

C3 Sat Colchester Park & Ride withdrawn.

6 May 08 100 M-S Lakeside to Chelmsford timetable alterations during Mon to Fri am/pm peak.

Meridian Line Travel

10 March 08 31 M-S Barley to Cambridge revised timetable.

SM Coaches

10 May 08 M15/31 M-S Harlow Town Service revised route and timetable.

Stephensons of Essex

17 May 08 288 M-S Maldon Tesco to Madon Leisure Centre service withdrawn.

18 May 08 6 Sun Southend to Southchurch Eastern Avenue new service.

Viceroy

3 May 08 11 Tu Great Chishall to Saffron Walden service withdrawn.

29 Tu Linton to Saffron Walden service withdrawn

34 M-S Saffron Walden Town Service withdrawn.

*Paul Harvey with acknowledgements to LOTS,
Essex & Hertfordshire County Council, Harlowride and First*

Rail Replacement

Sat 8th / Sun 9th, Sat 15th / Sun 16th March: c2c, Upminster - Pitsea

Bus service ran Upminster - Pitsea every 30 minutes, calling at all stations on both weekends. Service appeared to be exclusively operated by Ensign with Spectras and Volvo Olympians reported in use over the two weekends as shown below (no vehicle reports available for the 8th):

Spectra: 101 - 104, 106, 107 (YN51 ZVE, ZVH, ZVJ, ZVL, ZVN, ZVO); 101 in Reading cream and silver "generic" livery, 104 in Reading DayTrack / NightTrack livery, the remainder blue / silver. Volvo Olympian: 126, 127, 129 (P426 UUG etc); Reported in use on 9th: 104, 106, 126; 15th: 104, 107, 129; 16th: 101 (parked at Upminster Station), 102, 103, 107, 126, 127.

Sun 9th and 16th March: National Express East Anglia, Marks Tey - Ipswich

Four bus services running here on each day - Marks Tey, non-stop to Ipswich; Marks Tey - Colchester North - Manningtree; Marks Tey - Colchester Town; Colchester - Colchester Town - according to the NXEA timetable, early morning journeys (prior to the arrival of the first train from London) started from Colchester, rather than Marks Tey.

2 buses an hour each way on each route, although some journeys, particularly to Ipswich duplicated and even triplicated. Hourly shuttle service Colchester to Colchester North (appeared to be in the hands of Network Colchester with low-floor Darts)

Buses also appeared to be on standby at Colchester (2 x Cedrics vehicles on each day) and Ipswich (Belle Coaches Setra, Galloway Spectra, and Burtons Volvo B12B / Plaxton coach all noted on the 16th) These vehicles were showing Rail Replacement Running Numbers, but not sure if they were actually used in service.

Vehicles reported in use included:

Beestons, Hadleigh: Volvo Olympian / Alexander Royale: LSU 413 (possibly N597 VRH re-registered?). Volvo Olympian / NC Palatine II: L212 TWM. Both in use on 9th and 16th.

In addition two coaches (one of which was Volvo B10M / Van Hool: 226 LRB) were seen on A12 near Marks Tey station on the 16th - but not sure if these were part of the Rail Replacement operation.

Belle Coaches, Lowestoft: Setra Coach: SIL 9043 - see above.

Burtons, Haverhill: Volvo B12B / Plaxton Paragon: YN05 VRU (National Express livery) - see above.

Cedrics, Wivenhoe: All-Leyland Olympian: 5 (K815 HMV), Volvo B10M / Jonckheere: 15 (R15 CED), Volvo B12T / Van Hool Astrobel: 17 (YIL 7758). Noted on 9th (5 and 15) and 16th (5 and 17) - see above.

Chambers, Bures: Volvo Olympian / East Lancs: S848, 851, 856 DGX. (851, 856 noted in use on the 9th; 848, 851 on the 16th.), Volvo Olympian / NC: P549 WGT, P901, 902 RYO. (901 noted on both days, the remainder on the 9th only), Volvo Olympian / Alexander: P484, 488 MBY. (488 on the 9th, 484 on 16th).

First Essex: Volvo Olympian / NC: 34013, 34014, 34056 (P553, 554, 556 EFL); 34302, 34305, 34307, 34309, 34310, (L302 PWR etc), (9th: 34013, 34056, 34302, 34307, 34310. 16th: 34013, 34014, 34305, 34309).

Galloway, Mendlesham: DAF / Van Hool: 3860 PP, 5048 PP, 201 (AY53 HLO), 252 (YJ04 HHS). 3860 noted on the 9th, the remainder on the 16th. Optare Spectra: 229 (5946 PP) - see above. 201 in 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee livery, rest in standard Galloway colours.

Network Colchester: Scania Omnidiekkka / East Lancs: 101 (AY55 DKA), 102 (YN06 TFZ) on 16th. One unidentified Omnidiekkka also in use on the 9th. Dart SLF / Plaxton: 360 (SN54 HWY) noted on both 9th and 16th. Similar 529 (AY54 FRC) also noted in use on the 9th. Additionally one unidentified Trident / East Lancs was in use on the 9th.

Talisman, Great Bromley: Setra coaches: WSU 225, JSU 282, WSU 668, LSU 788, VSU 803. (788 and 803 noted in use on the 9th, the remainder on the 16th), Olympian / Alexander: J534, 605 CEV, L972 MSC. All in use on 9th and 16th.

Easter Weekend, Fri 21st - Mon 24th March: National Express East Anglia:

Romford / Newbury Park - Ingatestone, Gidea Park - Ingatestone / Billericay)

The closure of the Great Eastern main line at Shenfield required a major rail replacement service to be mounted over the Easter Weekend, with in excess of 120 different vehicles, from over 30 operators reported during the course of the four days.

Bus services were in operation as follows:

Ingatestone direct to Romford (Friday and Saturday) or Newbury Park (Sunday and Monday). Appeared to be mainly Ensign, with assistance from other operators, notably Kent Coach Tours on Saturday, as required. Every 30 minutes each day, except for Saturday, when buses ran every 15 minutes. Gidea Park all stations to Shenfield, (providing at least four buses an hour over this section) with alternate buses continuing to either Ingatestone or Billericay.

Ingatestone - Shenfield - Billericay using Clintona minibuses, every 30 minutes; Billericay to Laindon mainly NIBS every 30 minutes. Wickford to Pitsea. In addition an hourly coach service ran on all four days from Liverpool Street, direct to Colchester.

Vehicles noted in use as listed below - vehicles noted as "parked" at various locations were on layover or stand-by. It is not known if these vehicles saw service on the days in question:

ABC Travel, Barking - Volvo B10M / Plaxton: K555 ABC - noted on Saturday and Sunday.
Arriva London North - DAF DB250 / Alexander: DLA86, 88 (S286, 288 JUA) - noted on Sunday parked at Newbury Park (86) and Gidea Park (88).

Barkerbus, Roydon - Bedford Venturer / Duple: 36 (GAZ 6363) - Saturday.

Barnes Coaches, Barking - B10M / Plaxton: J753 CWT - noted parked at Ingatestone on Sunday.

Burton Coaches, Haverhill - All-Leyland Olympians: 345, 346 (F245, 246 MTW) - 345 on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 346 noted on Friday and Sunday.

Chambers, Bures - Volvo Olympians: P475, 484, 488 MBY; P549 WGT; S856 DGX; P901, 902 RYO. B10M / Plaxton: R361 GDX. 475, 484, 549, 856, 901 on Friday, 484, 856, 901, 902 on Saturday, 361 on Sunday, 488 on Monday.

Clintona, Brentwood - Vario / Plaxton: SF04 HXX, HXL; SF04 RHZ; YX54 GYZ; AE55 VPO - all noted on Friday, RHZ and VPO on Saturday, all except YPO noted on Sunday.

Also, Mercedes FX03 GJU noted on Saturday and VX06 KFE on Monday.

Corbel, London N10 - Volvo B7R / Plaxton: KX56 OVF - noted parked at Gidea Park Station on Sunday afternoon.

Crown Line, London - Volvo B10M / Van Hool: TSV 758 - noted parked at Billericay on Sunday.

Eastbrook Travel, Barking - Leyland Tiger / Plaxton Paramount: H643 GRO - Saturday and Monday (Leaside Travel livery).

Ensign, Purfleet - Spectras: 101 - 107; Volvo Olympians: 126 - 129; Metrobuses: 143 (D943 NDA), 167, 173, 175 (F767 EKM etc), 192 (F292 NHJ); Dart / UVG 702, 710, 783 (P902, 910 MOR; R83 GNW); Dart / Marshall: 723, 732, (R623, 632 VEG), 776 (R876 MCE). In addition, ex Lothian Olympian / Alexander J845 TSC in Lothian livery, was used on loan from the Ensign sales fleet. Noted in use on Friday: 101 - 107, 126 - 129, 143, 167, 173, 175, 845; Saturday: 101 - 107, 126, 129, 167, 173, 175, 192; Sunday: 101, 103, 106, 107, 126 - 129, 143, 167, 173, 192, 710, 723, 732, 776, 783, 845. Monday: 101, 104, 126, 127, 173, 192, 702, 710.

Falcon Coaches, Enfield - B10M / Jonckheere M676 KVV - noted parked at Billericay on Sunday.

Fellson of ? - Scania / Irizar - YN04 AKG - noted on Saturday.

First Essex - Olympian / Alexander: 30560 (P190 TGD), 31198 (L163 UNS) both on Friday; Volvo Olympian / NC: 34011, 34018 (P551, 546 EFL) both on Saturday, 34301, 34303, 34305, 34311, 34314, 34315 (L301 PWR etc). 34301: Friday and Sunday, 34303 noted parked at Brentwood Station on Sunday, 34305 on Friday, 34311 on Sunday, 34314 and 34315 on Monday. Leyland Olympian / ECW: 34818 (C418 HJN) - at least on Friday, Saturday and Monday. BMC Falcon School Bus: 68555 (MX55 MWS) parked at Ingatestone on Saturday. In addition, Solo 53113 (EU02 NDY), Dart / Plaxton 46827 (N827 APU) and Scania L94 / Wright 65680 (YR52 VEK) also noted at Ingatestone on Monday.

Fourways Coaches, Chelmsford - Ex Dublin Olympian / Alexander: H691, 699 PTW. Both noted on Sunday parked at Ingatestone (691), and Romford (699).

H. Godward, South Woodham Ferrers - Leyland Olympian / Optare: E914, 915, 917 DRD.

All noted on Friday, additionally 915 noted in use on Sunday and Monday.

Greenhill Transport, Southend - Supreme liveried Metrobuses: BYX 239V; LOA 434X; B184, 269 WUL; C343, 352, 361, 374, 439 BUV. In use on Saturday (239, 269, 343, 352, 434), Sunday (all except 343), or Monday (239, 269, 343, 352, 361.) In addition, Olympian / NC F442 AKB in "Helms of Eastham" livery was noted on Saturday and parked at Billericay on Sunday.

Griffin Bus, Polhill, Kent - Metrobus: LMO 191X noted parked at Billericay on Sunday.

Hardy Miles Travel, Southend - Metrobuses: 5426 (LOA 426X); BIG 8748, 8749, 8751, 8756. Noted on Saturday (5426, 8748, 8749, 8751, 8756), Sunday (8748, 8749, 8751, 8756), Monday (8749). In addition, Volvo Citybus / Alexander 254 (BIG 8746) noted on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Kent Coach Tours, Faversham - Volvo Citybus / NC: XIL 4348, 5260, 5577, F305 MYJ plus one unidentified example. Volvo B10M / Van Hool Alizee: BIL 1878. All in use on Saturday. Adidas overall advert (4348), Travelmasters yellow livery (1878, 5260, 5577), Stagecoach livery with dark blue lower panels (305).

G. Meadows, Crewe - Lynx II: J262, 266, 268, 271 UDW. 262, 266 at least in Cardiff Bus livery, noted parked at Ingatstone Station on Friday - Sunday. 262 appeared to be in use as a rest room. 268 noted at Ingatstone on Monday, 271 noted on Saturday at Shenfield and Brentwood.

Network Colchester - Omnidekka / East Lancs: 101, 102; Trident / East Lancs: 156; Volvo Citybus / East Lancs: 214, 333, 335, 337 (G614, 613, 615, 617 BPH); DAF DB250 / Plaxton President: T133 AUA in Wiltax livery. All in use on Friday, 337 on Saturday, 214, 333 on Sunday.

NIBS, Wickford - Trident / East Lancs: BIL 4539; Scania N113 / Alexander: G604, 605 KTX, H237 LOM; Omnidekka / East Lancs: EU05 ECV. (All noted on Friday, except 605 on Sunday and 237 on Monday).

Redroute Buses, Northfleet - Trident / Alexander: T648 KPU (East London Bus Co. p/h overall white livery); Olympian / ECW: C670 LJR. Both noted on Saturday.

Redwing Coaches: various coaches on the Liverpool Street - Colchester direct service. However the following coaches were noted parked at various locations on Friday, on layover / or possibly standby: Setra coaches 224 (BU04 EYS) at Romford; 296, 298 (BX05 UVD, UVG) both in Globus livery at Billericay; Mercedes Touro 258 (BX06 UMH) at Gidea Park. Iveco TurboCity / Beulas YN54 AAF was noted parked near to Gidea Park Station on Friday afternoon, with similar YN54 AAU parked at Newbury Park on Sunday.

Regal Busways, Chelmsford - Leyland Olympian / ECW: 1204 (C264 XEF), 1205 (SJR 617Y); both on Saturday.

Richmonds of Hertford - Volvo B10M/Berkhof: 892 LTV - seen on Monday.

Sullivan Buses, South Mimms - Volvo Olympian / NC: NV45, NV46 (N545, 546 LHG), NV106, NV118 (P906, 918 RYO). 45, 46 in use on Saturday, 45, 106 on Sunday, 118 on Monday.

Talisman, Great Bromley - Olympian / Alexander: L972 YSC in use on Saturday.

Trimmer Travel, Romford - Olympian / ECW: C673 LJR in Go-Ahead Northern red / blue livery. Seen in service Friday and Saturday, and parked at Ingatstone on Sunday.

Trustline, South Mimms - Dart / Plaxton: 51 (J51 EDM), 61 (L61 UDM). Both noted on Friday parked at Billericay (51) and Brentwood (61).

Wiltax, New Haw - All-Leyland Olympian K805 SMV, noted parked at Billericay on Friday, and in service on Saturday. DAF DB250 / NC: R382 GTW and DAF SB220 / Ikarus: K124 TCP both seen parked at Billericay on Friday. Dart SN04 EFH noted at Billericay on Monday.

Wings Travel, London - Mercedes Tourino coach: BX07 NKE parked at Ingatstone on Saturday.

Finally, some unidentified vehicles - Volvo B10M / Plaxton Paramount TJI1688 in cream / red livery, parked at Billericay on Friday and Monday, Metrobus GYE447W, Dart/Carlyle G501VYE both at Romford on Saturday and Arriva London Liveried Metrobus B252 WUL similarly at Ingatstone on Saturday. Volvo coach L683 MWE and Leyland Lion F390 GVO both at Billericay on Monday.

Coaches from Turners of Essex and various Redwings vehicles were noted on the Liverpool Street to Colchester direct service on Saturday, with vehicles from Redwings, SBC Leisure and possibly Lodges, High Easter noted on the Sunday.

Sun 30th March: NXEA, Liverpool Street - Chingford (until approx 13:00)

Bus service ran every 30 minutes, calling at all stations until approximately 13:00, when the train service resumed. Service appeared to be exclusively operated by Ensign with Darts. UVG-bodied 703 (P503 MOT) and Marshall-bodied 730 (R630 VEG) at least reported in service, with similar 723 (R623 VEG) parked at Liverpool Street.

Sun 30th March: NXEA, Liverpool Street - Colchester

Hourly coach service ran, from Liverpool Street non-stop to Colchester.

Vehicles in use included:

Talisman, Great Bromley - Setra coaches: TSU 182, JSU 282, S268 BTL.

Amber Coaches, Southend - Scania / Irizar: N146 BFL; Bova coach: TNJ 214.

Redwings Coaches, Herne Hill, London - Iveco TurboCity / Beulas: 232 (YN54 AAJ).

Sun 30th March: NXEA, Shenfield - Witham

The following services ran: Shenfield non-stop to Witham (every 30 mins); Shenfield all stations to Witham (hourly); Shenfield non-stop to Chelmsford (every 30 minutes); Chelmsford to Witham (every 30 minutes).

Vehicles in use included:

Chambers, Bures - Olympians: P484MBY, P549WGT, S848DGX, P901RYO .

First Essex - Olympians: 31198 (L163 UNS); 34302, 34310 (L302, 310 PWR)

Network Colchester - DAF DB250 / Plaxton: T133AUA , and one unidentified Omnidexka (possibly 101).

Talisman, Great Bromley - Olympian / Alexander 'Mega Dekkers': J534, J605 CEV .

Atlantean / ECW: RVW 90W was also reported in use.



Two Mega Dekkas for the price of one - J534CEV and J605CEV at Shenfield Station on planned Shenfield-Witham rail replacement. 30 March 2008 Chris Stewart

Emergency Rail Replacement Services

Mon 10th March adverse weather conditions

Buses replaced Stansted Express trains between Stratford and Stansted Airport at least in the morning peak, but no reports of vehicles used.

According to the "National Rail" and "c2c" web-sites, buses replaced trains in the "Coast-bound" direction only from early afternoon until close of service, due to overhead power-line problems, with trains continuing to run in service in the "London-bound" direction. Ensign provided 2 buses between Upminster and Grays, and 6 buses between Upminster and Pitsea, with vehicles including Routemasters RM54 (LDS 279A), RCL2220 (CUV 220C), RML2405 (JJD 405D) in use. RT4421 (NXP 775) was also noted at both Grays and Laindon.

Ensign also provided 2 buses between Royston and Cambridge due to overhead power-line problems. In addition, Ensign also covered the following - Haywards Heath: (2 buses), Faversham: (2 buses), Three Bridges: (4 buses), Ingatstone: (6 buses including at least 3 Spectras). All these were standbys and did various runs.

Tues 25th March A "limited" bus service was in use, covering National Express East Anglia services, following signal problems / over-running engineering work, including 9 Ensign vehicles at Ingatstone, Shenfield, Gidea Park and Romford.

Forthcoming Rail Replacement Bus Services (April / May)

Sat 12th - Sun 13th April c2c	Barking - Grays via Rainham
Sat 12th - Sun 13th April c2c	Chafford Hundred and Pitsea via Tilbury
Sat 12th - Sun 13th April NXEA	Wickford - Southminster
Sun 13th April NXEA	Marks Tey - Colchester / Clacton / Manningtree / Ipswich
Sat 19th - Sun 20th April c2c	Pitsea - Shoeburyness
Sat 19th - Sun 20th April c2c	Pitsea - Chafford Hundred (From 15:30 Saturday and all-day Sunday)
Sat 19th - Sun 20th April c2c	Barking - Grays via Rainham (From 15:30 Saturday and all-day Sunday)
Sat 19th - Sun 20th April NXEA	Wickford - Southminster
Sun 20th April NXEA	Marks Tey - Colchester / Clacton / Manningtree / Ipswich
Sat 26th - Sun 27th April LU District Line	Dagenham East - Upminster
Sat 26th - Sun 27th April NXEA	Wickford - Southminster
Sat 26th April c2c	Pitsea - Shoeburyness
Sun 27th April c2c	Upminster - Pitsea via Laindon
Sun 27th April c2c	Stanford-le-Hope - Southend Central / Shoeburyness
Sun 27th April NXEA	Witham - Colchester / Manningtree (InterCity services from Witham - Ipswich)
Sun 3rd May NXEA	Colchester - Ipswich / Harwich Town
Sun 4th - Mon 5th May (Bank Holiday) NXEA	Witham - Colchester Town / Ipswich / Harwich Town.
Sat 10th - Sun 11th May c2c	Southend Central - Shoeburyness
Sun 11th May NXEA	Colchester - Ipswich / Harwich Town
Sat 17th - Sun 18th May NXEA	Colchester - Clacton-on-Sea / Walton-on-Naze
Sun 18th May NXEA	Colchester - Ipswich / Stowmarket / Harwich Town (until 15:00)
Sun 18th May NXEA	Colchester - Ipswich / Harwich Town (from 15:00)

Sun 18th May NXEA

Waltham Cross - Stansted Airport

(until 13:00)

Sun 18th May NXEA

Liverpool Street - Stansted Airport

(until 13:00)

The engineering work planned for the eastern end of the District Line on Sat 29th / Sun 30th March, Sat 5th / Sun 6th and Sat 19th / Sun 20th April, appears to have been cancelled and rescheduled for August, although according to the TfL website and local publicity, the work planned for Sat 26th / Sun 27th April between Upminster and Dagenham East is still scheduled to take place.

Thank you to Chris Stewart, Toby Prescott, Ian Banks, Ross Newman at Ensignbus and Kevin Smith and Simon Hussey's photopic web-sites for additional information.



■ FIRST ESSEX

Acquired vehicles

20463 should read X193HFB. This was first registered 1.11.00 and moved from *First Coaches* to *First West Yorkshire* in 2.07.

Allocation changes

Period 12: 25 February 2008 to 30 March 2008

FGC=First Group cascade, i.e. transfer to/from another First fleet

(A)=acquired, including vehicles on loan; Anc=Ancillary fleet; (S)=spare/retained (licensed); D/L(S)=spare/retained (delicensed); D/L(D)=delicensed for disposal;

DS=Driving School; PS=Paint Spare

20463 FGC-(S); 30702 D/L(D)-sold; 56007 CF-FGC; 56008 CF-FGC

Disposals

30702 to Erith Commercials for scrap (see EBN527)

56007/8 Cheetahs to *First Aberdeen*

Repaints (Period 12):

65691 41011 53134 41013 53135 65692 41014 53137

Area News - workings and sightings:

Rail Replacements (March)

Major planned replacement work in the Shenfield area over Easter weekend (22-25 March) saw First Essex among the many other operators. Notable were Yellow School Bus 68555 at Ingatestone and Olympian/ECW 34818 at Laindon. Further vehicles are listed under the Rail Replacement section of EBN.

Clacton & Harwich

Olympian 34288 has now gone to Harris Commercials for repaint after major chassis repair works lasting about eight weeks.

March

17th CR67007 on DT103

25th CR34013 on DT104

Colchester

Volvo Olympians have been regularly appearing on 64/A again, with Lances still quite often on 64/A & 65.

March

- 3rd CF31198 on 509 (until now has usually been an ECW Olympian)
- 7th CR62407 on 67 (Fri daytime)
- 13th CR34305 on 65; CR65690 on 71 (Thu daytime)
- 14th CR65685/6 on 75 (Fri daytime).
- 23rd (Easter Sunday), CN47226 & CN67013 on 74
- 25th CR34014 on 66A; CR65687 on 71; CN67010 on 75 CR-Tiptree shorts (usually Dart)
- 26th Scania CR62410 on 75 (13.00 ex MN)
- 27th CR65652 on 66

April

- 1st Lance CN67010 on 71 (17.35 CR-CF and return)

Chelmsford & Braintree

From 25th March, Burnham Road in Althorne was due to be closed for three weeks with the 31X diverted via Mayland Mill and an ECC-funded 31D provided by Arrow Taxis to cover the gap.

March

- 7th Cheetah CF56003 on 72 (15.45 ex BE)
- 12th CF47228 on 56
- 13th CF34818 on 72
- 14th BE46812 on 352
- 15th CF46822 on 42
- 17th Solo CF53118 on 351 (15.05 ex CF)
- 19th Driving school 46127 on driver shuttle at BE
- 22nd CF42483 on 42, BE46824 on 352
- 29th CF42487 on 42, CF34807 and BE46823 on 352

April

- 2nd Olympian CF34818 on 351
- 3rd CF34818 on 72
- 4th CF46173 on 42

Basildon & Hadleigh

On 4th April, BN depot was host to CF34815, DT34280, CN47106 and CR62409 (all probably for MOT).

March

- 15th BN43732 on Brentwood 73
- 17th BN41644 on 551/81

Other News

Vehicles throughout the fleet (and the whole Group) are now receiving chrome front wheelnut rings or discs (the design differs depending upon the type of vehicle).

With reference to EBN526, Jobserve K643GVX appeared on ebay but did not sell. H390OHK should read H380OHK. Also in EBN526, Dart 46113 (seen with *First Wyvern*) should read 46103. This has been at Worcester for some time, and prior to that in Kidderminster at least as far back as 2004.

VR 3112 (XHK217X), having been sold by Flagfinders to *Totally Transport*, has now been exchanged with Export Bus of Rotherham for Alexander convertible open top VR WTC360T (originally Cardiff, latterly Southern Vectis but via Bath Bus Company and Solent Blue Line). 3112 is therefore likely to be exported.

Withdrawn Olympians 34816/9 were still at Erith Commercials on 18th March (34819 heavily cannibalised) along with Dart 46166 and the roof off another BN Dart. (*Please note, however, that visitors are not welcomed at Erith.*)

Devon & Cornwall exiles

With thanks to Simon Coates, the current disposition of former First Essex vehicles with First Devon & Cornwall is as follows:

Volvo 20108 (N608APU) – reserve, stored North Devon
Olympians 34809/12/3 (C408/9/12HJN) – Torpoint
Olympian 34817 (C417HJN) - Plymouth
Darts 46159/60/1/4 (N959/60/1/4CPU) – reserve, stored North Devon
Vario 52596 (R416VPU) – South Devon (shown as Tavistock but actual use uncertain)
Vario 52597 (R417VPU) – Totnes
Vario 52598 (R418VPU) – Plymouth
Solo 53107 (EO02FLG) – Camborne
Solo 53108/9/11 (EO02FLH/J, FKZ) – St Austell
Solo 53110 (EO02FLK) - Tavistock

Sources: Own observations, with many thanks to *First Essex* and to A Bird, T Clark, J Clayton, D Edwards, M Farmer, I Hardie, N Mansfield, TBL177M, J Podgorski, D Pretty, J Salmon, A Spindler, 'Solo', A Timms, R Webb, R Whitley, the *Essex Bus*, *South West*, *First Group Fans* and *British Buses Abroad in North America* y-groups, www.buslistsontheweb.co.uk, *Real Bus News*, LOTS, PSV Circle, *Bristol VR South West Bus News* (www.geocities.com/ndl642m).

Reports relating to First Group may be sent by text on 07973 509459, by fax on 01277 216745, by e-mail or by conventional post. Many thanks to all who do so.

Chris Stewart



Vehicle Workings

Unusual sightings:

March

3rd 300 on 8 (daytime)
11th 101 on 1 and 303 on 2
22nd 307 on 105
23rd 708 on 88 (usually SLF or Solo)

Ancillary vehicles

In use by January 2008 was a Mercedes Sprinter MWB Van registered MF04 DNJ. This has replaced N611 SMR, a Ford Transit SWB van which was the last vehicle in Arriva Livery.

Depot move

The new Network Colchester depot at Grange Way, Old Heath was complete and ready for occupation on 1st March.2008. The fleet moved from Magdalen Street over the Easter Bank Holiday (23rd/24th March) . The last bus to leave Magdalen Street was Dart 309 on the evening of 25th March. However, over the following few days, various buses visited for refuelling in order to empty the fuel tank.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to John Podgorski

■ ARRIVA SOUTHEND Limited

Grays – Southend Transfers

The following vehicles were transferred from Grays to Southend at the end of March in time for the extension of service 5 to Lakeside and the conversion of routes 4/4A and 13 to low floor operation.

3204 (P204 LKJ)	Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton B40F
3402 (R312 NGM)	Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton B33F
3425 (P425 HVX)	Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton B43F
3426 (P426 HVX)	Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton B43F
3427 (P427 HVX)	Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton B43F
3428 (P428 HVX)	Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton B43F

Other Vehicle News

A surprising loan to Grays during March was 2415 (N175 DWM) Mercedes-Benz 811D/Plaxton from Arriva Kent Thameside. This was covering whilst Dart SLF 3429 (P429 HVX) had accident repairs. 2415 was seen in Basildon working route 383 on 13th March.

Dart SLFs 3307/8 (R307/8 CMV) are to receive branding for route 13 which is to be promoted as “the sutton shuttle”. Meanwhile route 5 is now to be promoted as “Basildon Direct”. Dart SLF 3322 (T822 NMJ) is the first bus to carry the revised branding for the 5.

As a result of the service changes at the end of March Grays was expected to become an ‘all red’ depot with all vehicles allocated employed on TfL routes.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Richard Delahoy, John Podgorski and Essex Bus y-group.



The last full-sized saloon in Southend, (since 3379 burnt out) - 3384 - Dennis Lance SLF/Wright. *John G. Lidstone*



The new route branding for service '13 the sutton shuttle': along the side, it reads: 'Temple Sutton-Sutton Road-Town Centre'. Seen in Southend bus station on 2 April. *Ian Banks*

On *John Lidstone's* recent travels 'down under', he was surprised to find that this VR was in fact ex-Southend 354 (WTU 494W). Now Gardner powered and carpetted, it runs sightseeing tours of Dunedin (New Zealand).





Vehicles in ~ March 2008 from Stagecoach East Midland via Ensign Bus (dlr), Purfleet.

L364 K107 JWJ Volvo SLV YNF 215 PC 025021 Northern Counties H47/29F Body No 4493.
new 7/1993 to East Midland MS no. 107.

L365 L109 LHL Volvo SLV YNF 219 PC 025023 Northern Counties H47/29F Body No 4495.
new 8/1993 to East Midland MS no. 109.

Vehicles sold

L254 RAH 260W Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB

L293 RAH 268W Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB

L262 CJH 114V Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB

L197 GGM 108W Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB

All to Ensign Bus (dlr), Purfleet.

Allocations

L160 H160 HJN Clacton > Tollesbury

L364 K107 JWJ unallocated > Kelvedon

L365 L109 LHL unallocated > Kelvedon

L262 CJH 141V Tollesbury > Clacton > later sold

L319 N326 HUA Clacton > Kelvedon

L297 M832 CVG Hedingham > Sudbury

L341 R273 LGH Sudbury > Clacton

L345 N427 JBV Sudbury > Clacton

L357 J838 TSC single doored at Sudbury and to Clacton

L358 M276 UKN single doored at Sudbury.

With thanks to D R MacGregor

Ensignbus

Omnibus suppliers to the World

Ensignbus

DEALER STOCK MOVEMENTS

Vehicles in

from

Hedingham: Bristol VR's RAH 260/8W CJH 141V GGM 108W

Metroline: Darts P307/13/6/7 MLD.

Reading Buses: Spectras K702 BBL, J257 NLU

Stagecoach Devon: Varios R114/6 NTA Darts L714/9 JUD

Stagecoach Manchester: Olympians 331 HWD/J702 HMY/JSK 492/
H607 LNA/J688 TNF/F283 DRJ, Scania N632 XBU.

Stagecoach Western: Scania M951/3/4 DRG.

Vehicles out

to:

Dart L754 VNL: **Bankfoot Buses**, Perth.

Olympians C814 BYY D158/235/8 FYM: **Chester City Sightseeing**, all part open top,
except 235 which is full open top.

M1040: **A S Bone**, Hook, Hants.

Olympian B356 LSO: **Fowlers Coaches**, Holbeach Drove, Lincs.

Mercedes 709 N977 NAP: **Freedom Travel**, Ely, Cambs.

Scania M954 DRG: **Harrogate Coach Travel**.

Olympians K107J WJ L109 LHL: **Hedingham Omnibuses**.

Olympians P342/9 ROO: **Herberts Coaches**, Shefford, Beds.

Olympian 331 HWD: **Heritage Travel**, Brighton.
 Spectras J287 NLU, K702 BBL: **MASS**, Sheffield.
 Darts R696/8 MEW: **Servisair**, Dublin.
 Dublin Olympian 91-D-1080 now H794 PVW with **Swanbrook**, Cheltenham.
 Volvo D10M E865 RCS: **WJC Buses**, Airdrie.
 Olympian F41 XCS: **Z and S Coaches**, Aylesbury.
 Olympians C615/26/58 LFT: **Bubble Holdings**, Burnley.
 Bristol VR RAH 268W: Private owner in East Anglia for preservation.
 Tiger TPC 102X: **Thomas Maschler**, Zambia.
 Olympian F283 DRJ: **PVS** for scrap.

David Harman, with thanks to Ross Newman, Ensignbus

Trustline Buses / Galleon Travel

Acquired via Ensign (dealer) Purfleet are Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall R711 MEW and S528 KFL. *Ian Ransom*



The shuttle bus service connecting Wood Green Underground/ Alexandra Palace station to the Palace itself (whenever there is a major exhibition there) was, the last time I was there, operated by some fairly nondescript white coaches, but on 30th March (for the Annual Festival of Model Railways) Galleon Travel of Harlow had two ex Dublin Olympian/ Alexander - this one and H721PVW - whilst Kirby's of Rayleigh appeared to have one coach in use and there was another from a London operator. The LEZ looms in July 2008, and such operations may well have to change. *Chris Stewart*

Regal Busways

Small Operator News

Two more Dennis Dart/Plaxtons acquired are ex Arriva The Shires K414 FHJ, and M69 CYJ, this was new to Brighton Buses. Nelsons Leyland Olympian/ECW C73 CHM has been here on loan. *Ian Ransom*

Small Operator News

A&J MINIBUS Rochford Ford Transit/Steedrive H950 K VX has been withdrawn.

ABACUS PIPPS Hill Acquired from P&M, PIPPS Hill is Leyland Olympian/ECW C104 CHM.

APT COACHES Rayleigh Acquired from Happy Days, Stafford is YR02 ZZL a Scania K114/Van Hool.

BIDDLE Hullbridge Ford Transit M7 WAB has been reregistered YC02 XKX and sold to BCA, Measham (dealer).

BJS Gt Waking Leyland Tiger/Plaxton B405 CMC has been sold to School Bus Travel, Kingston Bagpuize.

BRENTWOOD COACHES Brentwood Volvo B10M/Plaxton LUI 7640 (N41 BWM) and LUI 7641 (N42 BWM) have been sold to Palmer, Truro.

BROOMSTICK Finchfield The PSV Circle reports that all 3 Toyota/Caetano minibuses G964 VBC, H889 ERY and J250 MFP have been withdrawn.

CEDRIC Wivenhoe Acquired from APT, Rayleigh is 827 APT (P103 GHE) a Scania K113/Irizar. Olympian H547 GKX is now fitted with LED displays.

CEEFA COACHES Basildon Leyland Tiger/Van Hool NIW 2309 (new as A381 ROU) has been withdrawn.

CHELMSFORD TAXIBUS Fiat Ducato EU03 EWP has been renumbered from 29 to 23. Sister EU03 EVK has been sold, as has Ford Transit EY54 NYB.

CJ TRAVEL Harlow Peugeot Boxer HG51 AUK has come from a private owner.

CM3 CARS South Woodham Ferrers Here but not previously reported is R447 SLY a LDV Pilot. Similar T139 PDA has been sold.

CN ENTERPRISES Abridge Volvo B10M/Plaxton F135 URP has been sold.

CRUSADER Clacton Setra S315GT EK51

KZA has gone to Evobus (dealer), Coventry.

DEVERE Sible Hedingham Iveco/Mellor P282 NNB has been withdrawn.

DMA COACHES Brentwood Acquired from Black & White, Scunthorpe is KBZ 8724 (B497 JDL) a Bedford YNT/Plaxton.

ENIGMA TRAVEL Colchester Acquired from Tony Glew, Colchester is Mercedes Benz 709D/Wadham Stringer N837 LGA.

FLAGFINDERS Braintree Former Eastern National Bristol VR XIL 1254 (XHK 217X) has been re-registered to XHK 217X and sold to Totally Transport, Blackpool (non-PSV). It then passed to Export Bus, Rotherham and is expected to be sold overseas. Dennis Javelin/Caetano R267 THL has been re-registered XIL 1254. MCW Metrobus D712 NKY has been acquired from Embling, Guyhirn, while Leyland Olympian/East Lancs KTL 44Y has arrived from Talisman, Great Bromley.

FORD Althorne Bedford YRT/Plaxton EHJ 147P (820 KPO, LAY 474P) has been withdrawn. Bedford YNV/Duple D66 ONS is reported as back in use.

GLEW Great Tey Bedford YMP/Plaxton SIB 9025 (D802 ALR) has been withdrawn.

HARDY MILES TRAVEL Rochford MCW Metrobus LOA 417X has been sold. Similar vehicles acquired from Ensigns, Rainham are F761/2 EKM. Also acquired is Mercedes Benz 709D/Plaxton N661 VSS. This operator has moved to a new base in Aviation Way, near Southend Airport.

KB COACHES Wickford VW LT31D minibus C541 VHO has been withdrawn.

KELLYS TRAVEL Harlow Acquired from an unknown source is T117 SOA a Setra S250.

LANGLEY TRAVEL Wickford Rare ACE

Puma/Van Hool D164 TCX has been acquired from Thorns of Rayleigh.

PDQ Colchester Here for some time, but not previously reported is VW Transporter MM05 YNP (a non-PSV).

P&M COACHES Crays Hill Acquired from Ensign (dealer) are Leyland Olympian/Alexander C615 LFT, Leyland Titan CUL 214V and Volvo Olympian/Alexander H846/9 TSC.

RICHARDS Chelmsford Scania K470/Irizar EU07 SKD has gone to Scania (dealer), Worksop.

RICHMON FOUR WHEEL DRIVE Stapleford Tawney DAF 400 L634 ANX is still here and has not been sold as previously reported.

SIMMONDS AND GRIFFIN Basildon Volvo B10M/Plaxton L533 XUT has been sold.

SINNOTT Molehill Green Ford Transit M597 GTT has been withdrawn.

SM COACHES Harlow MAN11.190/Optare L808 FRD has been withdrawn.

SOUTHEND RADIO CARS Southend Ford Transit D704 PEV has been sold. Iveco 49-10 N964 ABU has been withdrawn.

SS CABS Tiptree Ford Transit EK03 KZU has been sold.

STANSTED COACH & CARRIAGE Duck End Ford Transit R645 UDV has been acquired from a private owner.

SUPREME Southend Scania K113/Van Hool R454 YDT passed here from Crown, Thundersley.

THURROCK COACHES Grays Mercedes Benz 811D/Robin Hood D178 CLH has been sold.

TN TRAVEL Colchester The operating centre at GM Commercial, London Road, Stanway is back in use.

VICEROY Saffron Walden Mercedes Benz 709D/Plaxton N990 EAR has been sold to Stafford Bus Centre (dealer), Coles Heath.

WARD Alresford A recent addition is Volvo B10M/Jonckheere Y163 EAY.

WESTONS TAXIS Clacton Mercedes Benz 412D/Concept P595 HHF has been sold to MBM Travel, Nottingham.

WICKFORD COACHES Rayleigh Bedford YMP/Plaxton D279 RBV has been withdrawn.

YELO Braintree Ford Transit R204 BHL has been sold.

*Ian Ransom, with thanks to John Podgorski,
Chris Stewart, PSV Circle,
Essex Bus y-group*



General view of Hardy Miles new yard in Aviation Way off Eastwoodbury Lane at the back of Southend Airport. *Ian Banks*

40 years ago ~ the Southend Strike of 1967

The winter of 1967 was a period of unprecedented interest for bus enthusiasts, but not for the happiest of reasons, as Southend Corporation suffered a bitter five and a half week strike. The dispute started after a breakdown in national pay negotiations led the TGWU (Transport and General Workers Union) to instruct municipal busmen to ban overtime and the carriage of standing passengers and not to co-operate with any extension of one-man operation. This action was likely to have a considerable effect in Southend, as a shortage of crews meant that there was a heavy reliance on overtime at that time, but the decision to start the industrial action was not implemented for some weeks, giving the Corporation management time to prepare themselves.

The overtime ban came into effect on Friday

November 3 and immediately SCT management acted by turning over operation of the 17, which then ran from Temple Sutton to Eastwood Woodcutters, to Super Coaches of Upminster. SCT had only recently taken over operation of the 17 from Eastern National, due to EN's own crew shortages. A separate roster had been created for this and hence it was relatively easy to turn over that roster to Super, who used a variety of buses, ranging from an ex Westcliff (ordered by City) PD2, ex Western Welsh Tiger Cubs, ex London RT, RTL & RTW types and a new Strachans bodied Ford bus. All carried specially made destination blinds. SCT also hired seven independently owned coaches with drivers to cover schools contracts normally operated by a dedicated roster of senior SCT drivers.



Back at home in Southend, former Westcliff (ordered by City Coach Company) Leyland PD2 FJN 204 stands in Southend Central Station approach, alongside the Middleton Hotel. Photographer *Brian Ashley's* car, a 1966 Singer Chamois (a luxury derivative of the Hillman Imp), is parked behind!



SCT's Lowlanders were adapted for OMO with a special dispensation from the Ministry of Transport as they did not then have the periscopes normally required of OMO deckers. The sign explains it all - photographer *Paul Bateson*, then a traffic clerk with SCT, recalls driving these with a cardboard box on the cab floor to put the money in!

Turning over the 17 to Super was seen by the union as deliberate provocation and the dispute escalated into an all out strike with effect from the following Tuesday, November 7th. Eastern National's local crews then came out in sympathy and the longer distance EN routes turned short at the Co-ordination Area boundary (principally Benfleet Tarpots Corner and Rawreth Carpenters Arms). [We should mention here in passing that since 1955, SCT and EN had operated services jointly under the Southend Co-ordination Agreement, which was to last until deregulation in 1986].

The Corporation management reacted immediately to restore a skeleton service on other key routes. Non union and office staff

crewed a few SCT buses, and the Lowlanders were hastily adapted for OMO (driver only operation had been legalised for double deckers in July 1966) - which in the case of these buses was pay as you *leave*, with no tickets or change given. Many independent operators were approached to provide vehicles with crews, and every day more and more buses and coaches of every size and colour appeared, until there were about 25 independent vehicles in use everyday! Many were elderly vehicles but some fairly new coaches were provided, plus a former Silver Star Atlantean then owned by Midas of Brentwood – a definite rarity in an independent operator's fleet.

It had always been understood that normal



Former London Transport RT, RTW and RTL deckers were provided by Super and by Broadway Coaches. Here, *Brian Ashley* has caught LYF 310 on the 17, turning from Kenilworth Gardens into Southbourne Grove in Westcliff. A sign in the front window reads "To and From Temple Sutton". Note the platform doors fitted and the London roof number box has been removed. Parked outside the SCT depot, is similar OLD 837 in Broadway Coaches maroon and off-white, also taken by *Brian Ashley*.





Also parked on Central Station (downside) forecourt was RUP 285, an AEC Reliance with centre-entrance Park Royal coachwork, new to Sunderland & District. It has a Super Coaches sticker in the window but we are not certain if it was only on hire or had been acquired by them. We do know that another centre-entrance coach, Kirby's Atkinson, was used one man operated! *EBEG collection, Robin Jenkinson.*

Contrasting with the elderly vehicles was Super Coaches' almost new Ford R192 with Strachans bus bodywork, GNM 470F in a coffee & cream livery. *Paul Bateson* photographed it at Temple Sutton.



high-bridge buses could not be safely operated under Southend High Street railway bridge but in the turmoil of the strike a Broadway Coaches RT was allocated to route 29 and, having passed safely, almost immediately Super Coaches commenced operating their ex-LT deckers to and from the Pier Hill terminus, passing under the bridge.

After the first few days, destinations were shown by yellow and black printed cards. Normal SCT Setright ticket machines were used by the various independent operators. In addition to the hired buses, Southend took on volunteer crews and were eventually able to put another 25 buses on the road from their own fleet. A service was maintained on all the principal routes which the Corporation usually operated (plus the normally EN-operated hospital X90 service) and duplicated timetables - 11 issues in all, plus one Sunday version - were produced. Often these were only current for one or two days as the arrival of more buses enabled the service to be increased. Eventually about two thirds of

the normal revenue was being taken. Most services only ran between about 0600 and 1830, but an evening service was provided on the 3, 4B and 7.

In many ways it was a very sad time for the undertaking, affecting morale for a long time afterwards. Feelings ran high with mass meetings, marches, an emergency full Council meeting and finally intervention by Harold Wilson's Minister of Labour, Ray Gunter. On Canvey, shots were even fired at buses! The introduction of private buses was undoubtedly a major factor in the dispute, but it is also likely that the union were seeking to make a stand in Southend, for the Chairman of the Council's Transport Committee, Norman Harris, also chaired the municipal employers federation at the time. David Smith, writing in the FoKAB magazine Broadway about his experiences as a conductor with SCT, recalled that "it was a long time before the bitterness subsided and morale improved. We may have been pawns in a national struggle, but the outcome was a



Typifying the hired coaches is Kirbys 5710 WX, a Ford Thames with Plaxton Embassy coachwork. *Paul Bateson* had his camera to hand again, catching it standing at the SCT depot between trips on service 1; behind is KNG 371, a former Eastern Counties Bristol K/ECW provided by Westways Commercials of Maldon.



Bristol K types were still commonplace in Southend in 1967 in the Eastern National fleet, although the ex Wilts & Dorset examples had been withdrawn by then. However, former W&D GMW 196 photographed here by *Brian Ashley* in Victoria Avenue operating for SCT, belonged to Essex Coachways of Stratford and was in Tilling red, not green. It is thought that it only ran in Southend on Saturdays during the strike.

pay rise of £1 per week for municipal busmen - the biggest rise ever achieved. However the euphoria was short lived as Barbara Castle (who was Minister of Transport at the time of the strike and later became Secretary of State for Employment) imposed a pay freeze at about the same time. We eventually received the increase a year later, but at least it was backdated, which led to bumper pay packets that week! Meanwhile a slogan became widespread on blank spaces on internal bus advertisements "Rayleigh rounders, round and round, What about our pound!".

The passengers worst hit were those on routes normally operated by Eastern National buses - EN crews had come out in sympathy, but EN management made no attempt to

provide alternative cover, leaving their routes unserved and their passengers stranded. From the enthusiasts' standpoint however it was a period of unparalleled excitement with an incredible array of vehicles - no one knew quite what would turn up the next day!

The crews eventually agreed to return to work and the strike ended on Saturday December 16, normal services resuming the following day.

We have not been able to trace full details of all vehicles hired in, but the list overlap combines the report in the *Omnibus Magazine* at the time with vehicles later identified from photos:

Super Coaches/Upminster & District:

FJN 204 Leyland PD2/Leyland; FNM224E Ford R226/Plaxton Panorama
GNM470F Ford R192/Strachan bus; HUH 15 & 39 Tiger Cub/Weymann
JXN 108 & LYF 310 AEC RT ; LLU 563 Leyland RTW; LLU 857 Leyland RTL

Brightways, Southend – generally 2 coaches – Nov 8 to Dec 16
119 AUL Ford Thames/Duple

Broadway, Wickford – 3 buses (RT/RTL/RTW) plus a coach on first day – Nov 7 to Dec 16
KGU 46 - Leyland RTL; KXW 401 - Leyland RTW; OLD 827 - AEC RT

Button, Hadleigh (Daws Heath) – a one coach operator – Nov 14 to Dec 16 (HEK 301 subsequently identified)

Cook, Leigh-on-Sea (Highways) – a one coach operator – Nov 10 to Dec 16
471 JHO Bedford SB/Plaxton Embassy

Dover, Brentwood (Midas) – ex-Silver Star Atlantean, 2 coaches – Nov 7 to Dec 16
TMW 853 Leyland Atlantean/Weymann

Essex Coachways, Stratford – 2 coaches plus a decker on Sats – Nov 8 to Dec 16
GPM 817D Bedford VAL/Duple; GMW196 - Bristol KS/ECW

Kirby, Rayleigh – operated up to four coaches – Nov 16 to Dec 16
444 EBE - AEC Reliance/Plaxton Panorama; 5710 WX - Ford Thames/Plaxton Embassy;
JHL 670 - Atkinson/Plaxton (centre entrance)

Thatched House Group (Leighton, Barking / Ellis, Barking) – provided eight coaches.
Occasionally vehicles were sub hired from other east London coach operators – Nov 22 to Dec 16
4537 AP - Albion/Duple Firefly; VDY 466 - Bedford SB/Duple Firefly; plus (subsequently identified
CHM 593C - Ford Thames/Duple Mariner of Grange & Sons, Plaistow; also KNJ 716E & SGO
DNM 762D - Ford R192/Duple, A1 Coachways, London N22 344F)

Parsons, Wood Green (A.1) – generally one coach – Nov 11 and Nov 18 to Dec 16

Pathfinder, Chadwell Heath – two coaches – Nov 27 to Dec 16 (one subsequently identified as 985 ROO)

Reliance, South Benfleet – generally one of their coaches – Nov 7 to Dec 16
5194 AW - Bedford SB/Duple Bella Vega

Snow, Great Wakering (Cheldon) – one coach on first day only – Nov 7

Thorn, Rayleigh – generally operated three coaches, one sub hired from Stock, Hockley
(Rayleigh Grey) – Nov 14 to Dec 16 (Stock VBU 50 subsequently identified)

Wells, Hatfield Peverel – 2 deckers on Saturdays also coaches on occasions – Nov 25 to Dec 16
GTY 170 - Leyland PD2/MCW; LOU 38 - Dennis Lance/East Lincs

Weston, Wickford – generally one coach but on occasions both – Nov 22 to Dec 16 (JAA 481E subsequently identified)

Westways, Maldon – vehicle dealers who appeared to commence operation in order to provide Southend Corporation with ex-Eastern Counties Bristol K KNG 371. Later a front entrance Regent III/Roe VHO 123 ex-Creamline, Bordon came on the scene – Nov 20 to Dec 16

Whitwell, Southend – provided 2 coaches but generally only one – Nov 9 to Dec 16
ORP 600 - AEC Reliance/Duple Britannia (Also GOO 2 later identified)

Young, Newbury Park (Redbridge & District) – one coach but ceased operation before the termination of the strike – Nov 8 to Dec 2; 623 TKN - AEC Reliance/Harrington

School contracts were sub contracted to:

Channel Airways, Southend; Victoria, Leigh-on-Sea; Cook, Westcliff; Supreme, Hadleigh;

Broadway, Wickford. Gilbert, Stanford-le-Hope (Avro) replaced Victoria when the latter gave these up in favour of Royal Mail work sub contracted by Eastern National. He operated on stage work one evening only (12/12/67).

The following vehicles have not been traced to the operating company:

RUP 285 - AEC Reliance/Park Royal (centre entrance) and GOO 2, Ford Thames coach.

(RUP 285 was possibly Super, Upminster)

(GOO 2 was Whitwell, Southend)

Richard Delahoy, with thanks to Paul Bateson and Brian Ashley for their help in compiling this feature. Articles in the Omnibus Magazine, Broadway and local newspapers were also consulted.



The 20" x 8" yellow and black destination boards used in most buses were nicknamed "strike boards" and continued to be used for many years to come on buses hired short term by SCT, such as on Derby Day. These examples come from Richard Delahoy's collection; services 21 & 22 were only operated in peak hours during the strike.

John Rugg's diary: Saturday 11 November 1967:

"... Went to Southend all day and worked as a temporary conductor from 8.0 am to 7.0 pm because all the crews were on strike ...

... Did 7½ trips on service 29 with two different buses - an ex-Wilts & Dorset Bristol K6B, and an ex-London Transpory RTW of Broadway Coaches, Wickford ..."

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