Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 710 June 2023



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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Above: On page 1 of last month's issue was a photo of an Arriva Enviro 400 MMC with a blind to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III on 6 May 2023. **Ensignbus** had similar blinds, as seen on Ayats Bravo 371 (EU05 VBO) on Southend seafront service 68 at Belton Way West, Leigh-on-Sea on the (wet) Coronation Day itself. The blinds read "Celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III" **John G Lidstone**

Below: Ayats Bravo 369 (EU05 BZM) and fellow open topper Trident / ALX 400 339 were in use at Birmingham Pride over the Bank Holiday weekend. 369 received this overall wrap. It was back in service on route 68 on Bank Holiday Monday, 29 May, seen here opposite Southend Pier. **Nick Field**. On the same day, 339 plus Ayats Bravo 370 were in use on the Luton Town FC victory parade, celebrating their promotion to the Premier League after winning the play off final against Coventry City at Wembley two days before.



Essex Bus Magazine the journal of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group
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Above: Stephensons Enviro 200 467 (SN66 WKF) passes the statue of Herbert George Columbine VC, looking out across the North Sea, on The Parade at Walton-on-the-Naze whilst working the 1610 Walton Columbine Centre - Great Holland 9 on 15 July 2022. **Robert Appleton**
Stephensons operations in Walton, including further details about the statue, are featured on pages 28-31.

Front Cover: Looking absolutely stunning in the spring sunshine on its way to the Fenland BusFest on 21 May 2023 is the newly restored former Chambers of Bures Leyland Olympian / Alexander RL G864 XDX. Once a regular sight in Colchester on the Chambers service from Bures, it was one of three Alexander bodied low-height Olympians new to them (the others being F243 RRT and G706 VRT) and was from the same batch built by Alexander as Hedingham H160 HJN, as Mark Lloyd described in EBN 686 (October 2014). New to Chambers in November 1989, it had passed via Ensignbus to Helms of Eastham (Aintree Coachlines) in 2006, then on again through Ensign's hands, to Johnson Bros Tours of Hodthorpe in 2009 where it was used as a school bus. It was collected from there for preservation in September last year and appeared at the final Showbus Rally that month before the superb restoration seen here. **Brian Tegerdine**. A heritage photo of a Chambers bus in service is on page 27.

Publicity Items
Hedingham timetable leaflets all dated 16 April 2023 for Clacton Town 2, 3, 4, 5/A, 6/A/B, 7, 8/A, 136, 137; Colchester & Clacton 74,76/X; Walton on Naze & Holland on Sea 9, 97, 98, 105, 107, 134. The above is taken from the timetable covers, for example 2A is included in the 2 timetable, but not mentioned on the cover.

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

Subscriptions
A calendar year subscription is £26. New members may join from any month, but subscriptions will always run to December from whichever month the member chooses. Those joining from February to December inclusive pay a pro-rata subscription calculated at £2.30 per month. For example, a member joining in March would pay 10 x £2.30, i.e., £23. Please contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 3TT
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EBM Extra
EBM is published monthly. In addition, we aim to publish two Extras each year full of historical features. These are supplied to members free of charge, subject to funding.

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

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

Target Dates for EBM 711

Reports to Sub-Editors		**1 July**
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor		**7 July**
Dispatch by Printers	on or before	**15 July**

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 8th and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the next month.

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

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Group Notices

Membership News

Welcome to new member:
Ian Groves, Rochford - 1216.

Group Meetings

A reminder that the Annual General Meeting will be held at The Quaker Meeting House, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2QL on **Wednesday 12 July**, commencing at 1400. This is the same venue where meetings were held before being halted by the pandemic and is a five-ten minute walk from Chelmsford Bus & Railway Stations. Please note, there is no parking available at the venue (apart from for blue badge holders). This is an opportunity for you to come along and ask questions, or make suggestions to the committee, regarding how you would like to see the Group run. There will also be brief reports on how the Group is performing. Please note, there will not be the usual slide show after the AGM. If you are unable to attend, but would like to ask anything, please submit by e-mail to ianransom2008@gmail.com or by post to 34 Donald Way, Chelmsford, CM2 9JE. The current committee are willing to stand for a further year. However, this is not an automatic process, so if you would like to stand, please contact Ian Ransom (as above).

Further to this, we are delighted to announce the return of regular Chelmsford meetings, which, as before, will also be held at The Quaker Meeting House. These will be held on Wednesday evenings, doors open for a social chat at 1900, with the presentation starting at 1945. Unfortunately, for now, plans to hold meetings in the afternoon have been thwarted by the lack of a suitable venue (except for a meeting in October, see below). There is very limited on site parking, accessed via Cedar Avenue West, we would ask that you leave these for those less able to walk. On street parking in the evenings is available on Rainsford Road, Broomfield Road and Coval Lane. The meetings are being held jointly with our good friends at The Omnibus Society, Eastern & Southern Branch, who are very generously paying for the room hire so entrance is FREE. Dates organised for 2023 are:

20 September	Alan Osborne - Buses of Essex
15 November	Robert Appleton - Eastern Counties Omnibus Company from 1970 onwards
13 December	Richard Delahoy - Buses 20 years ago.

The 2024 programme will be announced in due course.

An additional meeting, which is being held in the afternoon, on **Saturday 28 October**, 1400 for 1430 start, is a presentation by Anthony Delaine Smith, the 2023 President of the OS, and Managing Director of Delaine Buses. This is at the Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, which is located between the Railway Station and Retail Market. All members of EBEG are invited to attend.

The Running Card

Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Sunday 11 June: Bromley Pageant of Motoring, Norman Park Bromley.
Sunday 18 June: Fathers' Day event at Canvey Transport Museum (subject to confirmation).
Sunday 18 June: Showbus Flyby Brunel University, Uxbridge to High Wycombe. Expected debut of restored Wings Tour ex-Eastern National open top KSW WNO 481.
Sunday 25 June: Summer on the Buses. London Bus Museum, Brooklands, Surrey.
Saturday 1 July: Steam Gala Day, Thursford. Bus and coach display.
Saturday / Sunday 1/2 July: Big Bus Bash. East Anglian Transport Museum, Carlton Colville.
Saturday / Sunday 1/2 July: Vintage Transport Weekend North Norfolk Railway. Free bus service from Sheringham to Holt, where there will be a static display of classic vehicles.
Sunday 2 July: Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum Open Day, North Hykham.
Saturday 8 July: Omnibus Society Special London Meeting to mark 90 years since the creation of London Transport "How and why did London's Transport become London Transport". Talk by Dr. James Fowler, University of Essex. Venue is The Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3BU, start time 1400 for 1430. All EBEG Members are welcome to attend. This talk is dedicated to the memory of the late John Taylor, a long-standing OS & EBEG member and is funded by a legacy he left to the OS.
Saturday 8 July: Open Day at Delaine Bus Museum, Bourne. (continued over)

Sunday 16 July: Open Day at Canvey Transport Museum (subject to confirmation).
Sunday 23 July: GS70 Event, to celebrate 70 years of the Guy Special, being held as part of Real Ale and Cider Weekend at the Epping Ongar Railway.
Sunday 23 July: 120 Years of Ipswich Buses at Ipswich Transport Museum.
Sunday 6 August: Vintage Bus Day, Mid Suffolk Light Railway, Brockford Station, Wetheringsett, Stowmarket IP14 5PW.
Sunday 13 August: Big Bus Show, Stonham Barns, Stowmarket IP14 6AT.

Events are published in good faith. However, the Group cannot be responsible for any changes due to future circumstances. Please check before travelling (especially for events that are not yet confirmed).

Books for Disposal

Thanks to a member who is thinning out their collection, and a donation from the estate of a deceased member, we have a collection of bus books covering EN and other Essex area operators, plus some on Bristol and ECW for disposal. They are free to members, just pay the postage (or collect from Southend, by prior arrangement). There are too many to list here. If interested, please ask for a list - contact Richard.delahoy@blueyonder.co.uk or send him an SAE (address on page 2). Please don't be shy, we want to get rid of all of them to one or more members!

Harlow Depot Running Day

Photos taken at the running day at Harlow depot on 21 May 2023 to celebrate 60 years since its opening are on the last three pages of this issue. Here is a sign outside the depot, perhaps stretching the point, as Arriva has only been in existence, and serving Harlow, for 25 years. Before this the depot was London Transport, London Country and various offshoots of the latter.
Richard Delahoy



Below: Beestons, Hadleigh (Suffolk) brand new ADL E20D / Enviro 400 MMC YX23 OSM at Southway, Colchester on 17 May 2023. **John Podgorski**



Preserved ex-Eastern National FLF



Alan Moore writes: "I have recently returned from the sixth European bus rally held in Sinsheim and Speyer Technical museums. There had been a former Eastern National Bristol Lodekka, 2878 (SVX 277D), at the Speyer location which I photographed on a previous visit (**above**) in 2017. Unfortunately I was not able to find it this time and speaking to museum staff they seemed to think the Kelly family who loaned it to the museum have taken it back". 2878 only had a short life with EN, it was one of the FLFs that were exchanged for Alexander (Midland) VRs in 1971.

Follow Ups to Previous Issues

FA Trophy Final May 1992

Roger Tuke writes: "Thanks as ever for another EBM received today and all the work that must go into each edition. Interesting article on the FA Trophy Final May 1992, with some lovely pictures I've never seen before. However, on page 27 the caption for CBT Coachways 46 (F246 MTW) states: "it was saved from a scrapyard and is now preserved in the livery it wore when with Southend". Can this really be true, if so it is news to me. There are a couple of photos on Flickr of it after sale from Burtons in Geoff Ripley's yard in March 2010, it would appear to be beyond being preserved.

"From my knowledge only two of CBT 41-49 may survive:
47 (H47 MJN): after the sad demise of Talisman it went to Lynx at King's Lynn but didn't stay long. It was reported as exported to the USA. Use, ownership and location or whether it even still exists all unknown. Any update would be very much appreciated.
49 (former H49 MJN) does still definitely exist, registered as KZP 361, an open topper in Paphos Sightseeing use in Cyprus.

"Also for interest, coach 103 (OHE 274X), pictured on page 28, had a further life after Arriva The Shires with Southlands Travel in Swanley, Kent. The other CBT Coachways coach pictured on the same page, 107 (H107 JAR), also had further operators after Countryliner, firstly Coralin Travel in Surrey (red livery) before going to Sevens of Dundalk in Eire (white livery) where it was re-registered 90-MH-5933, then recorded as passing to a driver training company also in Eire."

The editor replies: "Thanks to Roger for this update. As the article was written over a year ago, I cannot remember where I got the information from that 46 (F246 MTW) had been preserved (it did not come from David Bell who took the photos). However, it sadly does not seem to be true. There are no photos on Flickr taken since it was in the scrapyard in March 2010. Apologies for including this incorrect information."

On another note **Richard Delahoy** writes: "In this article it was claimed, no doubt tongue in cheek (!), that Colchester United's win against "at the time the mighty Leeds United 3-2 in the FA Cup, still ranks as one of the greatest giant killings of all time". All I can say in the interests of historical balance is, Carling (now Carabao) Cup Fourth Round, 7 November 2006: Southend United 1 Manchester United 0. Now that WAS a giant killing!"

Reversing

Further to the lists in previous issues, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays First Essex route 256 also has a mid-route reversal with passengers onboard, at Bluebell Wood in Billericay. With thanks to Ian Ransom.

Bus Funding and Fare Cap Extended

We've previously reported on the £2 bus fare cap (initially valid to March this year, then extended to June) and the short-term Bus Recovery Grant (BRG) funding to support the maintenance of service levels despite passenger numbers not returning to pre-pandemic levels. The current BRG funding ceases on 30 June. The Government made a welcome further announcement of support on 17 May, covering:

- the extension of the bus fare cap at £2 through to the end of October this year, then at £2.50 to November 2024. This is supported by £200m of Government money and participation by bus operators remains on a voluntary basis. We assume that those already offering the £2 cap will continue to do so and this covers the vast majority of services in Essex. The scheme will be further reviewed before November next year.
- providing further support to maintain services. Here, £300m has been committed over two years, of which £160m will be paid to local transport authorities "to improve fares, services and infrastructure", whilst the other £140m will go directly to bus operators. The existing BRG scheme will cease at the end of June as previously announced, and this new money for operators will be paid as a new "Bus Service Operators Grant Plus". It will be a supplement to the existing and long established BSOG (Bus Service Operators Grant) system, which is based on mileage and fuel consumption, and will be paid as 5.5p per registered commercial km (live + dead) plus an extra 13p-14p per litre on existing BSOG (currently 37.57p per litre for diesel buses), thankfully a simplified process, hopefully without the excessive bureaucracy that has dogged the CBSSG (Coronavirus Bus Service Support Grant) and BRG schemes. However, welcome though the BSOG+ payments will be, they are significantly lower than the existing BRG support - the impact will vary from operator to operator - and are unlikely to stave off further commercial service cuts.

The local authority funding includes £80m being provided in the current financial year, reflecting the risk of further service cuts and giving authorities some scope to buy back essential routes. It will be focused on places that do not have large existing BSIP allocations (remember that none of our authorities succeeded in getting BSIP - Bus Service Improvement Plan - funding), with the formula being used to reflect the amount of tendered mileage and level of deprivation in the area, amongst other factors. We understand that locally Essex CC have been allocated £4.9m, Southend £479k and Thurrock £433k of this so-called "BSIP+", for the current year. Those authorities elsewhere that did receive BSIP funding initially may also be allowed to use some of that to protect services under threat, rather than for the original purposes set out in their plan submissions. How the BSIP+ money will be used locally remains to be seen, especially in Southend which has not had any tendered services since 2005, and whether Thurrock will now be able to save their existing tendered services. Add to this a change of political control in Southend, now with a Conservative minority administration, not known for its interest in public transport matters.

We continue to live in interesting - and uncertain - times.

Eastern National Heritage Bus Display 8 May 2023

Three photos from this event, held at the Langford Museum of Power**,** were included in last month's issue, including the front cover photo. A further selection of photos is on the next three pages.

MXB 733, which hasn't been seen on the rally circuit since 2018, has a particularly interesting history. In October 1951, Tillings Transport bought a dozen chassis from Bristol Tramways - these were 1938 built AEC Regals originally fitted with Duple coach bodies. One received a second-hand Harrington coach body and ran for Tillings for three years, but the other 11 chassis were used to create six rebuilt chassis to which ECW fitted full-fronted bodies to the 'Queen Mary' style in 1952 as seen here. The batch was re-registered as MXB 733-8 and preceded ten new Bristol LLs with similar bodies, MXB 739-48. Although both the Regals and the LLs were only 7' 6" wide, the bodies had a full width front grille and concealed radiators, unlike the Eastern National PTW registered Bristol L coaches like PTW 110 illustrated on the cover of last month's issue. Typically, only 8' wide Queen Marys had concealed radiators on Bristol LWL chassis.



MXB 733 ran for Tillings until 1959 (or perhaps the end of the 1958 touring season) and passed to the ECW Sports Club at Lowestoft. It then went to the East Anglia Transport Museum by April 1972, but a year later was back with Tillings (by then named Tillings Travel (NBC) Ltd), which became National Travel (South East) in 1974. It was transferred to the Sports & Social Club in 1974 and it is seen top right on a Group visit to Prittlewell depot on 27 April 1975, with its ECW club lettering on the side.



In October 1978 the social club was disbanded and MXB moved to store at Youngs Coaches, Rampton, then to the Eastern National Preservation Group on Canvey Island in June 1979. It passed in 1994 to John Brenson, owner of Brentwood Coaches, for continued preservation. It was restored and rallied from 1997 onwards but was later sold along with most of Brentwood Coaches heritage fleet. It ended up in Kent in a state of disrepair, but was reacquired by the Brenson family in the form of John's son Jonathan in 2009, and has been the subject of a magnificent second restoration, as seen in the bottom two photos taken at the Eastern National Heritage Bus Display at the Langford Museum of Power, 8 May 2023.



Text and photos **Richard Delahoy**.

Leyland National 1833 (VAR 899S) in Eastern National's 1986 privatisation livery. Between February 1985 and October 1987 this bus had been in a silver based overall advert livery for Bates Motors, Maldon, it then received this livery.
Richard Delahoy



Bristol RELH / ECW coaches RPU 868/9M were delivered to Eastern National in May 1974 but were transferred to National Travel (South East) on the day of delivery. They did not receive their intended EN fleet numbers 453/4. Subsequent reorganisation of the coach fleets by NBC saw some similar types return to EN from NT(SE) in 1978 but these two did not, moving on to Eastern Counties instead. RPU 869M is preserved as ECOC RE 849 in Eastline livery, which it originally received in April 1984.
Robert Appleton



Ipswich Transport Museum kindly provided former Eastern Counties Bristol FS / ECW LFS 125 (GNG 125C) as a replacement for another vehicle that was a late withdrawal. It undertook three return trips from Goldhanger to the Museum, it is seen at Goldhanger. The photographer can remember seeing LFS 125 at Ipswich circa 1968/69, when it was in Tilling livery, so back then it is likely to have worked into Essex on Ipswich - Colchester 207, a service which was joint with Eastern National from June 1961 to April 1972.
Robert Appleton



ADL Dart / Pointer 2 731 (S731 TWC) was new to Essex Buses in October 1998, allocated to Eastern National division's Chelmsford depot. It spent its life at Chelmsford and Hadleigh, becoming 43731 in the March 2004 Sema renumbering. It was withdrawn in January 2016 and sold for preservation. It spent its whole service life in Barbie livery, but upon being preserved it was repainted into this dual purpose version of Eastern National's 1986 privatisation livery at Mardens.

Robert Appleton



First Essex provided three vehicles in heritage liveries for the event, two from Hadleigh, 37985 in Westcliff livery & 37986 in 1968 Eastern National FLF coach livery, and one from Basildon, 33424 in Eastern National NBC livery. The event provided the first meeting of First Essex Volvo B9TL / Eclipse Gemini 2 37986 (BJ11 ECY) with one of the vehicles the livery was based on, preserved FLF 2614 (AVX 875G).

Richard Delahoy



All three First Essex vehicles were spruced up for the occasion. Basildon Engineering Manager Gareth Norris spent time over the weekend working on 33424 (VT59 JPT), including painting the wheels and blacking the tyres, and his efforts can be seen here the day after, with the bus on route 9 in Billericay High Street on 9 May. **David Moth**



Service Revisions

Ian Ransom

27 March 2023
A5 (Daily) Stansted Airport - London, Paddington NEW SERVICE **National Express**. 16 journeys each way, including some overnight.

28 April
767 (Daily) Stansted Airport - Nottingham via Peterborough and Leicester NEW SERVICE **National Express**.
Two journeys each way.

21 May
Z4 (Daily) Pitsea Broadway - Tilbury Amazon **First Essex**. Revised timetable.

5 June (given as 7 June in error last month)
7 (M-S) Southend Travel Centre - Rayleigh Station **Stephensons**. Revised timetable to afford better connections with the Arriva service 7.
64 (Sch only) Sible Hedingham Post Office - Boreham New Hall School **Flagfinders**. Revised route and timetable.

22 June (and other dates when events are held at Chelmsford Racecourse)
CCRS (runs as required) Chelmsford Railway Station - Great Leighs, Chelmsford Racecourse **Ensignbus**.

1 July - 30 September
1 (Daily) Point Clear - Clacton Pier NEW SERVICE **Hedingham**.
7 (M-F) St Osyth - Clacton Pier Avenue **Hedingham**. Enhanced summer service will operate, five / six round trips Mon to Fri and four on Sats & Suns, then reverts to winter timings of two round trips Mon to Fri only from 1 October.

With thanks to Paul Harvey.

As reported on page 6, the £2 maximum single bus fare scheme has been extended to 31 October and First Essex vehicles now have blinds that advertise this fact. These alternate with the normal service details. Enviro 200 44539 (YX13 AHO) on route 47 (not 37!) at Springfield Sainsbury's on 2 June 2023. **David Moth**



Acquired Vehicle

37047 YJ06 XLX YV3S2G62X6A112328 K757 H45/29F 05/06 First West Yorkshire

Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini. Delivered to Westway, Chelmsford on 23 May 2023, collected from First West Yorkshire at Halifax. In Urban livery with Halifax main fleet names, but these were quickly removed. First Essex already own 37027/34-37/42/53-54/62 in the YJ06 Xxx registration series (all previously acquired and all allocated to Colchester). 37047 is a replacement at Chelmsford for 32484 which is now out of use (see below). It entered service on 24th on Chelmsford-Colchester routes. A photo of it is on page 17.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 2 2023/24 (23 April - 20 May)

32484 CF-CF (oos), 42930 CF (oos)-Disposal, 42934 CF (oos)-Disposal, 42944 CF (oos)-Disposal, 44002 CF-CF (oos), 44908 BN (oos)-BN, 63168 HH-BN, 63312 PT (oos)-BN, 63370 FG-BN (oos), 63372 FG-BN (oos), 63373 PT (oos)-BN (oos), 63375 FG-BN (oos), 63381 PT (oos)-BN (oos), 63383 PT (oos)-BN (oos), 64017 CF (oos)-Disposal, 66818 CF (oos)-Disposal, 66823 CF (oos)-Disposal, 67194 BN-BN (oos), 69421 CF-CF (oos), 69901 BN (oos)-PT (oos), 69904 BN (oos)-PT (oos), 69912 BN (oos)-PT (oos), 69913 BN (oos)-PT (oos), 69914 BN (oos)-PT (oos), 69918 BN (oos)-PT (oos)

69901/04/12-14/18 moved from Basildon depot to Ensignbus at Purfleet on 12 May. They had First Essex fleet numbers, logos and legal lettering painted over before the move. They are for scrap, but as they are still in stock we will not show them as Disposals yet. These were all the Volvo Hybrids which were out of service at Basildon, four others are in storage at Quayside depot, Colchester, see EBM 708. A photo of 69918 is on page 14. Their removal freed up space at BN for acquired ex-Hoeford StreetLites 63312/73/81/83 to move from Purfleet to Basildon the same day. 63312 was the first of these to enter service at Basildon, on 17 May. This was followed by 63373 on loan to Hadleigh on routes 28 and Z3 and 63383 on B3, both on 22nd. 63312 and 63373 (at least) entered service still with Solent fleet names on cove panels (photo on page 14).

Disposals

42930, 42934, 42944, 64017, 66818, 66823 as in EBM 709, although one minor correction, 42944 was collected by Shelton Motors from Westway depot, Chelmsford on 11 May, not in April.
Further to EBM 709, 66760 did go to Ensignbus and then went to Shelton Motors for scrap on 16 May.

Repaints

44661 was at Mardens on 17 April (still in Urban on that date). Repainted into red shuttles livery, it was completed and returned to Chelmsford on 10 May.
Both 44660 and 44661 have since received updated blue super rear adverts for 'Beaulieu to Chelmsford Station Express Service' replacing the ones they had before repainting (as per 44662 are reported in EBM 707, but apologies, a correction, the first 6 in the fleet number was written as a 4 in that report).
47607 repainted from Southampton City Red livery to red shuttles at Mardens between 6 and 16 April, back in service on 17th.
47657 was at Mardens repainted into Essex Bus green on 21 May (perhaps surprisingly as all other StreetLites at Chelmsford have received red shuttles livery), back in service on 24th.
63328, which, as reported in EBM 706 was hit on the offside rear corner by a tractor on 13 January 2023, and was illustrated in EBM 707 heavily cannibalised, was back at Quayside after repair at the end of May, repainted into red shuttles livery, the first long StreetLite to receive this livery. It varies from other red repaints in having black rather than red around the light clusters. Also, the black background to the shuttles name and logo at the bottom of the windscreen is curved rather than straight. (Note, 47696 and 47697 at Colchester do not have this background, the name and logo are directly on the glass.)



Correction to last month, 44**4**60 should have been 44**6**60. It is seen **above** on ECC service 73 at Cherry Gardens, Maldon on 24 May 2023. **Dave Arnold**

Around the Depots

(All vehicles listed below allocated to relevant depot except where stated. All dates May 2023 except where stated.)

Colchester

Further to EBM 709, Barbie liveried 32629, which had been parked in the scrap line, was back in service on 8 May.
32526, which had also been on the scrap line as illustrated last month, was seen at First Eastern Counties Ipswich depot on 12 May, and then it too returned to service, on 31st.
67805 was also seen in Ipswich depot, on 10 May, just the one day, it had been in service the day before and was back in service the day after.
37613, which has been out of service since the end of March, is in the workshop requiring a new back axle / differential.
Due to a vehicle shortage, with many vehicles off road, 32482, 32483 and 32642 were on loan from Chelmsford from Tuesday 30 May, during half-term week (so not needed for schools work at CF). The first two mark a return of ALX 400s to CR. On 30th, 32482 was on S1 & S2, 32483 was on S4 and 32642 was on S4 & 87.

News of the Harwich routes (6 May to 1 June). After three days of double deck operation on 3-5 May, as reported last month, the 0720 Maldon - Colchester 75 and 0915 Mistley - Colchester 104 reverted to single-deck operation, and was single-deck for this whole period. However, a few double-deckers did reach Harwich: 32676 (7th), 37140 (12th and 27th), 37136 (19th), 37138 (27th), 37015 (30th) and 37037 (31st). On 27th, 37138, and on 30th, 37015, were unusual in working the evening 102 journeys. The single-deckers continued to be a mixture of Enviro 300s, Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urbans, and StreetLites, both 10.8m long and 11.5m long versions. On 24 May all journeys on 102/103/104 were worked by StreetLites, they were 47658, 63329, 63330, 63331, 63335 and 63339, the first time that the 102/103/104 have been 100% StreetLite operated.

Clacton routes. Route 74B has again mostly been worked by long StreetLites during the last month. Exceptions have been double deck Volvo B9TLs 37134 (13th), 37138 (3 June) and 37140 (20th); short StreetLites 47655

(10th) and 47696 (25th); Enviro 300s 67750 (31st & 1 June) and 67805 (15th); Volvo B7RLEs 69517 (19th), 69519 (12th) and 69520 (25th).
Route 76: 37010 (14th), 37133 & 69519 (21st), 63344 (28th), 37053 & 63342 (Bank Holiday Monday 29th), 37062 (4 June).
Enviro 300 67741 on 11 (24th). Volvo B7RLE 69520 (in Thamesway livery) on 82 (3 June).

Chelmsford

Further to EBM 709, in the scrap line on 11 May were 32484, 42941, 42956, 44002 and 44913. The same five vehicles were still there on 21st and had been joined by 69421 which had some significant front end accident damage. There was still no sign of 44005 on either date.
67160 on 37 / 351 (17th). 67171 (11th) & 67197 (14th) on X30 (full route).
67756 on 372 (12th).
DS66860 on driver training on A12 at Marks Tey (15th) and at St Botolph's Circus, Colchester (16th).
DS66863 on driver training on 371 route in Witham town centre, Colchester bound (4th) and in Brentwood (16th).

Basildon

From 28 May 2023, routes Z3 (both directions) and 22 moved from stand N to stand M at Basildon Bus Station. This was to allow stand N to be reserved and used for the increased frequency on route 28 when required (following the service increase on this route on 16 April) although stand P continues to be the main departure stand for the 28. Stand M had been free since the withdrawal of route B5, also from 16 April. (There is no stand O.)
33570 an unusual double-decker on X10 shorts (19th).

Service Vehicles

Further to EBM 701, it is confirmed that Hadleigh still has Ford Transit engineering van SN17 NWV.
At Basildon, similar SN17 NWX was still there on 31 May, but had been joined by new plain white engineering van Vauxhall Movano 93015 (KR23 VWX). This is all electric, a charging point was fitted at BN on 31 May.
MR22 THU is a silver Mercedes-Benz Vito minibus for driver shuttles at Chelmsford, first noted on 1 March this year.
FG23 XYY Is a white Vauxhall Vivaro minibus for driver shuttles at Colchester and is also all electric. However it cannot be used at present as CR is awaiting the installation of a charging point.
Both the above shuttles possibly 8 seats plus driver but this has not been confirmed.

Creamfields South Festival

We reported on the first Creamfields South Festival, an electronic music festival, in EBM 698 (June 2022). The second one was held from 26-28 May 2023, also at Hylands Park. First Essex again provided shuttle buses from Coval Lane, this time on two routes, the second one direct to the campsite rather than the main entrance. A service returning people to Chelmsford from the campsite was also operated on Bank Holiday Monday 29th morning. On Friday 26th, due to normal service commitments for FE's double-deckers, Ensignbus provided the daytime service on this day only, although FE operated in the evening. Noted were EB 134, 135, 139 & 149 and FE 33425 & 33983.
Noted on Saturday were 32540, 32551, 32673, 33424, 33425, 33685, 33983, recently acquired 37047, 37133, 37621, 37985 and 37986.
Noted on Sunday daytime were 32673, 33425, 33983, 36216, 36220, 37007, 37047, 37136, 37139, 37621 and 37985.
Noted on the mass exodus on Sunday night after 2200 (complete list): 32641, 32642, 32673, 33425, 33983, 36216, 37007, 37047, 37133, 37621, 37985 and 37986.
Noted on the return service from the campsite on Monday were 32673, 37007, 37133, 37135 and 37138.
Of the above, 32673, 33424, 33425, 33983, 37007, 37133, 37985 and 37986 are all in special liveries, making the service of much interest to enthusiasts.
Buses were parked in Marconi Plaza (at the end of Fairfield Road) for festival goers to purchase or collect pre-paid wristbands for use on the shuttle buses. On Friday red shuttles 44661, on Saturday recently repainted Essex Bus green 47657 and red driver trainer 69151 were parked nose to nose and on Sunday red driver trainers 66860 and 69148, also parked nose to nose.
This is thought to be an exhaustive list, although there is the possibility one or two vehicles may have been missed.
Some photos are on page 17.

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Stephen Barham, Dale Bell, David Edwards, Jake Gill, William Morrison, Gareth Norris, John Podgorski, Colin Sigston, Derek Stebbing, Rob Webb, Robert West, Bustimes, Bus Lists on the Web, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

First Essex News in Pictures

Ex-Hoeford StreetLite 63373 (SL16 RBU) entered service with First Essex on loan from Basildon to Hadleigh depot on 22 May 2023. It is seen the next day on Benfleet Road, Hadleigh on Essex CC contracted service 21C, still with its Solent fleet names.
John G Lidstone



Fire damaged Volvo 7900H 69918 (BV13 ZCA) being towed from Basildon depot to Ensignbus, Purfleet on 12 May 2023. More details on page 11. Six of the batch of 19 are stored at Purfleet, with another four stored at Quayside, Colchester …
Gareth Norris



… but nine remained in service at the end of Period 2, 69905 refurbished and in red shuttles livery (albeit without vinyls), six in route 100 City Country Connections livery, 69907-10/16/19, and two, 69915/17 in original 'A Greener Essex' route 100 branding. However, 69908 (BV13 ZBN) was withdrawn from service after use on 24 May. It is seen leaving Basildon Bus Station on route B2 just three days earlier on Sunday 21st.
Richard Delahoy



As reported last month, Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban driver trainer 66825 (MX05 CEY) has moved from Essex to First Eastern Counties at Norwich where it is seen about to turn into Red Lion Street from Rampant Horse Street on 11 April 2023.
David Bell



Another driver trainer. Rear view of Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 66886 (MX55 LHL), in First Midlands & South Yorkshire driver trainer livery, at Butt Road, Colchester on 16 May 2023.
John Podgorski



First Essex appear to be taking on some rail replacement work which previously would have been operated by Ensignbus. On Sunday 14 May, the c2c Leigh-on-Sea to Basildon service was exclusively operated by vehicles from Hadleigh depot. On the same day, FE were also working between Waltham Cross and Stansted Airport for Greater Anglia. Scania / Enviro 400 MMC 36838 (YN69 XXV) is seen at the Airport.
Jake Gill



As reported last month, 67194 (SN66 WKR) has gone to ADL Harlow to have luggage racks fitted and to be repainted into Airlink livery for operation on route X10. It is seen parked there on 15 May 2023 alongside LG21 JCJ, a BYD / ADL Enviro 200 EV (electric vehicle), Go Ahead London SEe150. To the left of the photo is a Wheel Forward Wrightbus StreetLite.
Allan White



Destination Displays

Only two ALX bodied Volvo B7TLs remain in service, 32482 and 32483. 32483 (AU53 HKA) is seen having just left Chelmsford Bus Station and turned left into Duke Street on route 372 to Colchester on 17 May 2023, with an unusual via point "Avoids Duke St. Bridge". The bridge it avoids is in the background.
Daniel Pretty





Enviro 400 33562 (SN58 CGY) on route 25 at Queensway, Southend on 16 May 2023. The destination is a recent replacement for "Southend Bus Stn" and before that just "Southend" - but all the time the actual name of the termination point has remained Southend Travel Centre.
David Moth



Creamfields Festival

Details on page 13. All photos on this page taken in Coval Lane, Chelmsford.



Ensignbus Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 139 (BJ11 DVR) on Friday 26 May 2023.
Daniel Pretty



Two Colchester buses in special liveries on Saturday 27 May. Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 32673 (SN55 HFA) in Remembrance livery and Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 37133 (SN57 HDH) in 60th Anniversary Colchester Zoo livery.
Adam Kelleher
A special event, with later closing time, was held at the zoo on 2 June to celebrate the 60th anniversary, with shows and bands plus a Zoobilee Party. As part of the events, 37133 was on display.



Also on 27th, newly acquired 37047 (YJ06 XLX), details on page 11.
Adam Kelleher

Enviro 200 YX10 BFL is now painted white ready for resale. Dennis Trident / Alexander ALX 400 BIG 7596 (ex V130 MEV, new to Stagecoach London)) has re-entered service after over a year being in reserve. It has also been painted white.

Before and after… BIG 7596 on 17 May 2023 still in former owner Acme Travel's livery (**right**) and again just over a week later on 26th (**below**). Both **Adam Barham**





With thanks to John Card, Adam Kelleher, Keith Sadler and LOTS.

Colchester
Acquired is Enviro 200 CX08 DJO from Arriva Cymru at Rhyl, where it had fleet number 2143. It had only been in Wales for six months or so, before that it was at Arriva North West at Birkenhead (same f/no.). It arrived on 1 June.

Due to a shortage of serviceable Park & Ride buses, there have been occasional appearances of other buses on this service, including 3988 on 12 May and 4021 the following day.

Southend
No fleet or service news this month, but on 21 May 2023 Matthew Evans hired the Newman family's former Southend Transport Leyland Tiger / Duple Caribbean 250 (A250 SVW) to recreate some of its former operations on Southend's various limited-stop London coach services.

A significant number of commuters used to travel on the services from the Grays area into London, with routes X1 & X11 from Southend, X21 from Shoebury, X31 from Canvey and X41 from Prittlewell all converging to offer up to a five minute headway here. Coaches used the old A13 through Socketts Heath rather than going into the centre of Grays. The stop at The Oak, Socketts Heath was a very busy one. 250 was posed here, **below**, just as it would have been when new in the 1980s, dropping off a good load of homeward bound evening peak passengers as it headed for Canvey. **Richard Delahoy**

There were also express journeys on X10 (Southend) and X30 (Canvey) that missed this stop, using the A13 by-pass. The London services peaked in winter 1986/7 with 64 journeys each way on weekdays, but financial problems caused cutbacks from the end of 1987 and the X31 as seen here last ran in 1989. The main Southend service continued into Arriva days but finally ceased in February 2002 (with Stephensons running a reduced replacement service until July 2008).



Harlow

Two more of the eight VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsars acquired last June (see EBM 699) have been repainted into new 724 Green Line livery. These are 3772 and 3797. This means that the four that were acquired in the old aquamarine and cream livery have now received Green Line livery, whereas the four that were acquired in current light blue livery retain that for now.

Optare Solo1459 and VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsar 3752 have been delicensed.

Below: The third VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsar to receive route 724 Green Line livery was 3797 (FL63 DXF), seen at Hertford Regional College, Ware on 16 May 2023. **Owen Woodliffe**



Below: Southend's Optare Versa 4205 (YJ61CJE) on route 8 to Great Wakering and Landwick, by St Mary's church in Rectory Road, Hawkwell on 17 April 2023. The bus will shortly pass under the 13' 6" railway bridge further along Rectory Road that restricts the 8 to single deckers (likewise, the inter-worked 7 has a low bridge at Hockley Station, also 13' 6" clearance). **Andrew Sugden**



Right: Southend Optare Versas 4204 and 4208 are unusual in having blue rather than black under the windscreen on the new livery which makes quite a difference to their appearance. Here is 4208 (YJ61 CJU) on route 7 in Chichester Road, Southend on 16 May 2023. **David Moth**. The normal black can be seen on the photo of 4205 on the previous page.



Below: As reported last month, ADL E40D / Enviro 400 MMC 6530 (YX16 OJA) has been acquired by Southend from Maidstone. It was illustrated last month on its delivery run, here it is in service on route 2 at Southchurch Road, Southend exactly a month later on 16 May, now with an offside advert. Something has caught the passengers' attention. **David Moth**



Significant Allocations

255	EU05 AUT	KN to CN by 2 May, had returned to KN by 24 May
262	EU58 JCJ	SY to CN by 3 May
821	YN56 FFA	KN to SY by 4 May, returned by 19 May
873	PN09 EMV	SY to KN by 10 May, returned by 17 May
910	SK04 SFD	Back to service mid-May

Fleet News

Further to last month, Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Gemini Eclipse convertible open top 502 (LF52 ZNE) was spotted on tow without its roof heading back to Clacton on 14 May. It has since been worked on in the workshops at Clacton and had a ticket machine fitted in late May, ready for the start of the open top season at half term holidays, 29 May to 2 June. However, as of 4 June it had not been seen in service nor reported on Bustimes.

Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Gemini Eclipse 2 LX59 DCE, numbered 530, entered service on 11 May 2023, from Hedingham depot. Reference to this vehicle being acquired was in EBM 693 (January 2022).

Presidents 573 (W491 WGH) and 587 (PL51 LDU) continue in daily use as does Mini Pointer Dart 287 (HW54 BUE).

Long term off road are 283/4 (OU57 FGV/X) and 520 (LX05 EZC).

As above, Solo 910 (SF04 SKD) returned to service but 911 (SF04 SKE) has now been off road most of May.

On 14 May 511, 811, 817, 850 and 852 all undertook Greater Anglia Rial Replacement work.

Service News

Routes 50/A, 69/A, 79, 84 and 85 reverted to KN allocated vehicles and drivers after a short transfer to CN due to staff shortages at KN. Schools service 901 now starts at Hall Road, Mount Bures. 903 now serves Layer de la Haye and 904 has been replaced by the 903 diversion of service. Services were amended on 26 & 27 May due to Ride London Cycling event, with Colchester town services truncated and kept out of Head Street, High Street and North Hill on 26 May, other places affected included Halstead, Great Yeldham, Walton and St Osyth. The following day services into Maldon were affected.

Preservation News

L103 (BAR 103X) attended the Fenland BusFest on 21 May and this year was able to be photographed with Chambers Olympian / Alexander G864 XDX which has also been superbly restored, as seen on the front cover.

With thanks to John Podgorski & the Hedingham website.



Right: As reported in the last two issues, former Go Ahead London Enviro 200 274 (YX60 FCE) was repainted into fleet livery at Mardens and entered service in April. It is seen outside Clacton depot in the bright dropping evening sun on 11 May 2023.
Mark Lloyd



Above: Scania N945UD / East Lancs OmniDekka 809 (YN55 PZM), with Chambers fleet name, arriving in Maldon from Southminster on service D2 on the morning of 17 May 2023. **Dave Arnold**.
Services D1/2 will pass to Stephensons on contract renewal at the end of July, Stephensons having operated those routes from their inception in April 2007 until August 2017. Until recently, double-deckers have been rare on these routes, they are normally operated by Enviro 200s.

VECTARE — Chris Stewart

New Mercedes Benz Sprinter / EVM Citylines are:
208 RX23 TFK
214 RX23 TKV
215 RX23 TFJ
216 RX23 TUU
217 RX23 TUV
218 RX23 TUW

208 fills a gap in the Sprinter numbering sequence 200-213 and the others follow on from this.

These have generally been used outside Essex, additional vehicles being needed for the Newark to Nottingham (erstwhile Gash and Road Car) service 90 which was taken over from Marshall's of Sutton on Trent from 16 April 2023. However, 214 moved to Essex on 30 May, used that afternoon on Waltham Abbey / Cross and Epping services, then from the next day and up to and including 3 June (i.e. up to this issue went to print) it was used on Brentwood-Blackmore 61 group of services and associated 62. It is all white with Vectare fleet names.

Enviro 200 MMC 320 (SN16 OVP) was involved in a serious collision with a van whilst working route 505 on 23 May.

Other Operators

Roger A Smith



Above: Stephensons ECC contract route 12 (Billericay to Wickford) passed to sister company NIBS on a three month emergency contract in July last year after the original winner of the tender pulled out. The retendered contract was then won by **Arrow Taxis** from 21 November 2022. Atlas bodied Mercedes-Benz RX67 OPU is seen in Billericay High Street on 9 May 2023. **David Moth**

Airport Bus, Stansted Airport
It was reported last month that BX65 WBE and BX65 WBO, a pair of Caetano bodied Scania K360s (C49FL), had gone from here. WBO is now with Hairy Haggis Tours, Bathgate, West Lothian, Scotland.

Don's of Dunmow
New DH23 DON is the first Van Hool EX17H in the UK. It is to full PSVAR specification, 63 seater plus crew and driver, with wheelchair reduces it to 57 plus crew.
Scania K420EB6 / Lahden OmniExpress DH61 DON has been offered for sale.

M&M Staffing, Cooksmill Green
Neoplan N2216 (C57FLT) OU18 ZSX has gone to Edinburgh Coach Lines, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Roman Coaches, Colchester
This operator has been granted a new operator's licence and the following vehicles are reported as being here, all previously with Swift Travel, North Weald:
BU06 CUJ, Setra S415GT-HD, C49FT; SP06 AEC Bova XHD122D-340, C49FT; YP10 VZB/C, Scania K400EB4s with Lahden C51FT bodies; MJ11 DHM, Neoplan N2216/3SHDC, C52F; PJ12 ATV, Neoplan N2216/3SHDC, C53FT; HF64 YCX, Ford Transit minibus, M16; YN67 VDD, Irizar i6 integral, C55FT.

With thanks to Alex Hazell, Patrick Munford, John Podgorski and the PSV Circle.

Vehicles
Volvo Olympian / Northern Counties 808 (M408 RVU) has gone for preservation, ex store at Galloways.

Former London Scanias
We can now provide a definitive list of the fate of the 29 Scania OmniCities bought in a dealer capacity.

On fleet, as numbers 531-5 - ex SP58, 110, 113, 106 & 94 respectively (YT09 ZCF, YR59 FYP, YR59 FYU, YT59 DXZ and 535 being confirmed as YT59 SFY).

Now sold are:
To Hornsbys: SP57, 104 (YT09 ZCE, YT59 SFF) (as reported in EBM 708)
To Wagonwheels on Location: SP74 (YT59 RXY)
To Border Bus: SP90 (YT59 SFO). Note, this isn't the same one that was on loan to Border Bus earlier this year, that was SP109 (YR59 FYO).

The other 20 remaining have all been sold to Go North West for use on the Manchester Bee network franchised services when GNW take over. Stephensons are responsible for conversion to single door and TfGM specification, including painting in base yellow ready for appropriate logos to be added. 13 have already been converted and are to be used by Go South Coast for the summer for seasonal service uplifts (although not all are yet yellow). These 13, which are already with GSC (some are currently based at Morebus Poole & Bournemouth), comprise:
SP60, 76, 83, 85, 95, 98, 102, 105, 109, 119, 125, 126, 132 (YT09 ZCK, YT59 RYA, YT59 RYJ, YT59 RYM, YT59 SFZ, YT59 SGV, YT59 SHJ, YT59 DXY, YR59 FYO, YR59 FZA, YR59 FZG, YT59 PBF, YT59 PCF).

The other seven are still being prepared and will go to GNW in due course, possibly some via GSC. These are:
SP56, 65, 84, 107, 108, 117, 127 (YT09 ZCA, YT09BJV, YT59 RYK, YT59DYX, YT59 DYY, YR59 FYY, YT59 PBO).

Below: Former SP105 (YT59 DXY) at Stephensons Boreham depot on 22 May 2023 fresh from repaint into Manchester yellow and about to be sent to the south coast for the summer. Incidentally, the black bus is 904 (YN53 CFX), a Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekka, in a special livery for Great Baddow High School. It received this livery soon after acquisition in 2015. **Matt Crooke**



Services
In the latest Essex County Council tender round, the group have won the following contracts starting on 30 July 2023.
NIBS: 565 Brentwood - Bulphan.
Stephensons: 32 Chelmsford - Ongar, D1/D2 Maldon - Bradwell, 7/7A Stansted - Bishops Stortford, 5 Sumners Farm - Harlow, 14 Harlow - Pinnacles, 306 Wickham Bonhunt - Bishops Stortford.
This represents an additional PVR of nine overall.

With thanks to the companies, Matt Crooke and John Podgorski.

The Martin Walter Romney and Clintona

Chris Stewart



This interesting photo has surfaced through our friends at The Bus Archive. Clintona Coaches of Brentwood was started by Alan Lewington and Rob Staines in the 1960s using a Commer minibus. Following an amicable split after two years, Alan formed Lewington's Coaches and Rob stayed with Clintona and concentrated on minibuses, and it was only really in the post-Deregulation era after 1986 that larger vehicles were operated, although there was a Plaxton bodied Bedford VAS in the 1970s and this interesting vehicle here.



We know it's a Thames Trader chassis with a Martin Walter 'Romney' body, the original design and production of which was by Kenex of Dover before they were taken over by Martin Walter, a very old established firm who had started making horse harnesses in 1773 but who by the 20th Century had progressed to motor vehicle bodies. They became famous for ambulances and the 'Dormobile' motor caravan, the latter name eventually being adopted for PSV bodies - Clintona had Ford Transits with Dormobile bodies in the 1980s and 1990s.

From research by Richard Delahoy and Phil Moth, fifteen appear on 'Bus Lists on the Web', namely:
EGM 219 for Duncan, Motherwell (Kenex C29F)
USD 490 for Conway, Irvine (Kenex C25F)
636 EFH for Horton Road Hospital, Gloucester (Kenex C29F)
787 RFC for unknown operator (Kenex C25F)
7894/5 UK for Wolverhampton Corporation Transport (non PSV)
645 TKJ for Whitefriars of Wembley (seen in the advert on the **opposite page**)
CDU 51B for Coventry Corporation Transport
8642 FN for Reeves of Faversham
833 UWL for Amey (civil engineering contractors) of Lower Wooton (Martin Walter (MW) C36F, presumably with tip-down seats across the gangway)
770 WKM - demonstrator for Martin Walter (MW C25F)
DFN 685B for H M Lewis, Oakdale (MW C25F)
EPL 464B for British Aircraft Corporation, Weybridge (MW B29F)
BSN 240C for Leven Vale Coaches, Alexandria (MW C??F)
DYX 676C for Rickards of Brentford (MW C20F) - there is an excellent photo of it on the SCT61 website (www.sct61.org.uk) which appears to show it on its first day of service in May 1965.

Nicholas King of the M&D & EK Bus Club wonders if the Clintona coach - photographed after their move to Little Warley Hall Lane in about 1973 - might be 8642 FN, which had passed to Campbell & Durling, Grays in October 1964, but if anyone can confirm then please let us know!

710 for EBM 710

Below: H C Chambers & Son, Bures Bedford YRT / Plaxton Derwent B55F JRT **710**N, new to Chambers in August 1975. Leaving Colchester bus station on the long route to Bury St Edmunds via Bures, Sudbury and Lavenham in May 1977. **Robert Appleton**



Stephensons Operations in Walton

Robert Appleton

Details of operator changes for ECC contracts from 31 July 2022 were included in EBMs 699 & 700 (July & August 2022). One of the effects of the changes was that Stephensons lost all their work in Walton-on-the-Naze. Here is a look back at their operations there between 2016 and 2022.

Prior to the 31 July 2022 new tender awards by ECC, the previous round of large scale retendering in the area was effective from 10 April 2016. Stephensons of Essex gained the following routes serving Walton:
9 Walton Columbine Centre - Frinton-on-Sea town centre - Great Holland (Mon - Fri)
105/107 Walton Columbine Centre - Colchester (Mon - Sat).
At the same time they also won 101 Point Clear - Brightlingsea Colne School and 115 Weeley - Thorpe-le-Soken Tendring Technology College (both schooldays only) in the Tendring area, but these did not serve Walton.
Up until April 2016, route 9 had been operated by First Essex from Clacton depot. It operated Tues/Thurs/Fri but was expanded to Mon - Fri when Stephensons took over. Route 101 was a renumbering of 119A which had been operated by Panther Travel. Routes 105/107/115 had been operated by Arriva (Colchester).

Stephensons originally worked these services from an outstation of Boreham at Telford Road on the Gorse Lane Industrial Estate at Clacton (two doors down from the since closed First Essex depot). When this site was redeveloped, the buses moved to the ex-Talisman Coachlines depot at Great Bromley in June 2020. More recently they had moved again to the ex-New Horizon Travel depot at Frating at the end of January 2022.

On 1 August 2022 these services passed to Go Ahead Hedingham. The nearest that Stephensons now come to Walton is with school service 702, Frinton-on-Sea - Colchester Norman Way Schools, one journey in each direction. This serves parts of Little Clacton and Clacton, but does not quite reach Walton as it starts and finishes at Frinton railway gates.

Below: The last month of Stephensons operation, Enviro 200 468 (SN66 WKG) on The Esplanade at Frinton-on-Sea on 7 July 2022, working the 1610 Walton Columbine Centre - Great Holland 9. **Robert Appleton**



The terminus of services 9 and 105/107 is the Columbine Centre, which is Walton's community and leisure centre. It is named after a resident of Walton-on-the-Naze, Herbert George Columbine VC (1893-1918). On 22 March 1918 Herbert was in the Machine Gun Corps of the Army defending a position at Hervilly Wood in France during the First World War. He held his position and kept firing to the last, until he was killed by a German bomb. For his gallantry he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

There is a statue of Herbert George Columbine VC, looking out across the North Sea, on The Parade at Walton-on-the-Naze, as illustrated on **page 1**. The Columbine Statue Fund was set up under the patronage of Dame Judi Dench to raise money for the statue and it was unveiled on 1 August 2014, almost the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. The statue was sculpted by John Doubleday who was born in Maldon, and lives at Great Totham in Essex. He is still sculpting, and has his own website: www.johndoubleday.co.uk.

The Columbine Centre opened in 1992. It is run by Frinton and Walton Town Council. It adjoins the Bath House Meadow Coach Park. Bath House Meadow also has a car park, children's amusements, and a swimming pool, all run by Tendring District Council.

Below: Transbus Mini Pointer Dart 413 (EU03 CFX) on The Esplanade in Frinton-on-Sea on 12 April 2016, at the start of Stephensons contract. **Bottom**: Enviro 200 469 (SN66 WLL) departing from the Columbine Centre on 6 July 2022, on the 1119 105 to Colchester. Both **Robert Appleton**





Before & After Stephensons

Below: Prior to 10 April 2016, route 9 was run by First Essex. Enviro 200 44599 (YX08 HJF) from Clacton depot in Audley Way, Frinton-on-Sea in FE's last week on 7 April 2016. This bus is now at Chelmsford. **Robert Appleton**

Bottom: The first day of Hedingham operation, 1 August 2022. Enviro 200 283 (OU57 FGV) passes Kino Amusements in Prince's Esplanade, Walton as it heads towards the Columbine Centre on the 105 from Colchester. **Alan Moore**





Richard Delahoy recalls setting up the Walton operations

Robert's notes and photos above bring back memories of setting up the Tendring services after Stephensons won the four bus tender, as it was one of the last jobs I did before retiring from Stephensons. (I should explain that since around 1990, I had been responsible for a lot of their back-office work, including route planning, registrations, compiling duties, publicity, fares compilation & ticket machine programming, BSOG claims, O Licence changes and many other tasks, through my transport consultancy business).

The first step was to measure the routes using Google Maps, to establish total daily mileages for the three operating patterns (schooldays, non-schooldays and Saturdays) and plan efficient duties and vehicle workings, based on the timetables specified by ECC, which were a given and couldn't be altered. That data then formed a key part of the costing exercise to arrive at a daily price to bid for the contract.

Having succeeded in our bid, an early step was registering the routes with the Traffic Commissioner's Office, but this was not entirely straightforward as the maps supplied with the tender were poor quality black & white copies of a 1:50,000 Ordnance survey map and the routes were not exactly the same as the ones we were replacing. ECC didn't offer any explanation of the differences. For example, under Arriva, 105/7 had terminated at Walton Railway Station but were now to terminate at the Columbine Centre - so I had to find out where that was, how to turn buses round there, where to take stand time, which parts of the roadway there were public and which were private, and so on. There were other route changes in Weeley so that the bus passed the Council Offices there on the way to Colchester. I took a ride out on an Arriva bus but had to fathom out the differences. The 9 was a First Essex service and only ran on certain days of the week. Again, some of the details were unclear and the bus appeared to use private, unadopted, roads in Frinton. On the day of my fact-finding visit, I duly introduced myself to the First driver and explained that I wanted to see exactly where the route went. His reply was that he wasn't sure either, as the service only had one regular driver but he was off that day! Together we did manage to work out where to go.

The outstation in Telford Road that Robert mentions was already in use for the double-deckers which worked the commercial 702 & 704 school services to Colchester. The site was just a space in an open yard. Shortly before the services were due to start, I went out with the Boreham depot manager (the outstation was controlled from Boreham) and some drivers to show them the routes, but also to work out some of the turning arrangements and to look out for suitable filling stations that accepted the right fuel cards and could be accessed by a bus. I also explained the complexities of the duties, as drivers had to swap buses at certain points in the day, to ensure that buses of the correct capacity were on the school runs - the 115 required 70 passenger capacity, including standing, so needed a long Enviro 200, and interworked with the 105. The bus workings also had to allow for drivers who needed to run to & from the Clacton depot at the start or end of their shifts. A key point was that these new routes could only be worked by single-deckers due to the 13' 3" railway bridge at Kirby Cross (as illustrated in EBM 700, August 2022). Buses were rotated back to Boreham for maintenance and safety inspections.

It all seemed to work out OK, even though the timetable specified by ECC for the 105/7 had the potential for buses to meet each other along a single-track section of road at Little Bentley. 105/7 were 'back road' services which ran via a number of decidedly secondary country roads in places!

Not long afterwards I retired from working for Stephensons as part of my phased plan to wind down my business and retire fully - an objective I have now *almost* completely achieved, but I still seem to have no spare time!



Right: The initial Clacton operating centre simply comprised spaces rented in a secure commercial vehicle yard. On my fact-finding mission on Saturday 20 February 2016, the sole occupant was 506 (YN07 LHD) a Scania N230 / Scania OmniCity. It had been new as an ethanol powered demonstrator for Scania, used In London by Transdev on the 148. It then passed to Reading Transport as their 599 and was acquired by Stephensons in 2011converted to conventional diesel power. **Richard Delahoy**

HARLOW commemorating 60 years of Harlow Garage

A running day was held at Harlow depot on 21 May 2023 to celebrate 60 years since its opening and here is a selection of photos taken on the day by **Richard Delahoy**.



Right: The depot faces onto Fourth Avenue, near the bus station, but the frontage is now largely obscured by trees. This is the exit, many pictures exist of buses lined up on the right over the years, as typified in the shot below.

Below: Types synonymous with Harlow depot in its early years, RTs, Routemasters and RFs. Right to left, RT1700 (KYY 527), RCL2233 (CUV 223C) and at the back, RF673 (NLE 673). As far as we know, RCLs didn't operate from Harlow, but RMLs and RMCs did.





Two generations of ECW bodywork. The GS class, Guy Specials with ECW bodies, was first used at Harlow in 1964. **Right**: GS15 (MXX 315)- a genuine HA bus - and GS12 (MXX 312) contrast with a later type, the short and narrow Bristol LHS, in this case BN45 (GPD 313N), **below**. New in 1974, it had been allocated to Harlow from 1977 (initially as a trainer) to 1979, it later also ran at Grays.

Rear cover: 175 of the RF class were modernised in 1966/7 for continued use on the Green Line network, including RF281, **top**, with broad light green relief band. However, as traffic dropped off, 24 were quickly demoted to bus work two years later, as exemplified by RF146 **bottom**, with yellow band and London Transport fleet names as opposed to Green Line. In both photos, in the background can just be seen the latest Green Line livery on a VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsar, as illustrated on page 20 (rear view) and in last month's issue (front view).







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