ESSEX BUS NEWS

No. 549
January 2010



ESSEX BUS ENTHUSIASTS GROUP
www.essexbus.org.uk



Third Southend-on-Sea Heritage Bus Running Day

A new participant on the running day was ***Nelsons*** *(NIBS) with one of their former Cardiff Scania N113/Alexander deckers,* ***G604 KTX****, caught by Russell Young on the Rayleigh Road in Eastwood.*

[Russell Young]



Stephensons' *own fleet contribution included two of the recently acquired former Lothian Leyland Olympians. Here* ***972*** *(K872 CSF) shows off the neat single door conversion as it departs Southend for Shoebury East Beach - with specially programmed electronic blinds.*

[Richard Delahoy]



Regal *contributed their former demonstrator 08-plate MAN with Wrights body,* ***WX08 DFN****, seen here in Websters Way, Rayleigh en-route to Southend, again with specially programmed electronic blinds.*

[Martin Ruthe]

Essex Bus News

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

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

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

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

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Dates for your diary

■ PRESS DATES

EBN dated	*reports to Editors by*
February	**23 January**
March	**20 February**

The 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 (see Group Directory).

■ SOUTH ESSEX MEETINGS

Venue: **Wickford Cricket Club, off Swan Lane, Wickford** - five minutes walk from Wickford Station and 5 minutes drive from the A130 and A127. In Wickford town centre, turn into Swan Lane from Runwell Road (Swans pub is on the corner); then turn right into the entrance about 100' up on the right - marked Wickford Tennis Club. This is an unmade road, so beware of potholes. Go straight ahead towards the tennis courts and then left at the end - the cricket clubhouse is in front of you. Car parking available on site.

Doors open at **1930** for an informal chat, with the main talk or show from **2000** to **2145/2200**; a cash bar is available. Members and guests welcome. £1 donation please towards the hire of the room.

Richard Delahoy

***Front cover**: A snowy Little Waltham with four buses on the 70: **First 66799** running north to Colchester following **66799** (out of sight). In the opposite direction, **66830** is followed by **66809** heading towards Chelmsford. [John Salmon]*

Rear cover:

*Resplendent in **Southend Transport** colours, **233** (MRJ 233W) gleams in the winter sunshine at the Ashingdon Schools terminus on route 7 - a location it would have visited many times in ST days. [Terry Clark]*

*Correctly displaying the "Pay Conductor" sign, **Ensign's** ex LT Metrobus **M1** heads past Hadleigh Church in the mid-morning sun en route to Southend on its first journey.*

[Russell Young]

Winter/Spring 2010 programme

- **Monday February 8** - "Omnibus Afterlife", a slide show of buses in non-psv use, by *Trevor Brookes.*
- **Monday March 8** - AGM, followed by slide show "The Eastern National Midland Area, Past & Present" by *Alan Osborne.*
- **Monday April 12** - more archive slides of Essex/East Anglia operators by *Martin Weyell.*

Further dates for 2010 will be announced later.

Due to the severe weather and deteriorating road conditions, the January 11th meeting regretfully had to be cancelled.

■ NORTH ESSEX MEETINGS

Venue: downstairs room at the **Friends Meeting House, Church Street, Colchester**, just south of "Jumbo" (the water tower) and behind the Mercury Theatre. Town centre bus stops and parking are nearby. Doors open at **1930** for an informal chat, with the main talk or show from **2000** to **2200**. £1.50 donation towards room hire, please. Slides/digital photos are preferred, but prints can also be shown. Members and guests welcome. *Dave Arnold*

2010 programme ~ slide shows by:

- **Friday January 8** - "The Midlands" - *Trevor Brookes*
- **Friday February 12** - *Fred Lawrance*
- **Friday March 12** - *Alan Osborne*
- **Friday April 9** - *Dave Mitchell*
- **Friday May 14** - *Richard Delahoy*
- **Friday June 11** - *Steven Hughes*
- **Friday July 9** - *Dave Arnold*
- **Friday August 13** - *Steve Maskell*
- **Friday September 10** - *Russell Young*
- **Friday October 8** - *to be advised*
- **Friday November 12** - *Gary Sharpe*
- **Friday December 10** - *to be advised*

■ EVENTS

- **Saturday / Sunday February 26-27 - London Transport Museum**, Guided Tours at Acton Depot.
- **Saturday / Sunday March 13-14 - London Transport Museum**, London Transport in Miniature, Family Open Weekend at Acton Depot.
- **Monday April 5 - Easter Bus Event, "Red Bus Day" (Eastern Counties)**, Ipswich Transport Museum, Suffolk.
- **Sunday April 11 - Annual Open Day and Bus & Coach Gathering**, London Bus Preservation Trust, Wisley Airfield, with bus services to Cobham Museum and Weybridge Station.
- **Saturday/Sunday April 17-18 - UK Coach Rally**, (new venue) East of England Showground, Peterborough.
- **Saturday/Sunday April 17-18 - North Norfolk Railway, Bus & Train Weekend**, mixed traction timetable, including network of bus services in the area.
- **Saturday/Sunday April 24-25 - Classic & Vintage Weekend**, East Anglia Transport Museum, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft.
- **Saturday May 1 - Theydon Bois Transport Bazaar & Bus Running Day**, Theydon Bois Village Hall (opposite village green). 1100 till 1530. No car parking at village hall.
- **Sunday May 2 - Ipswich to Felixstowe Historic Vehicle Run**, Ipswich Transport Museum, Suffolk.
- **Sunday May 16 - ADX 1 Day (Ipswich 60th)**, Ipswich Transport Museum, Suffolk.
- **Sunday May 23 - 100 Years of the London B-Type Bus**, Pump House Transport Museum, Walthamstow.

Information is published in good faith. Members are strongly advised to check details with the organisers/website nearer the date. The Group can accept no liability if events are cancelled or altered.

Colour prints for sale

The Group Sales Stock contains a considerable number of duplicate prints that I have formed into sets of vehicle types. This month, I can offer a set of 25 colour prints Southend Transport Leyland Nationals at 30p each for Group members, plus cost of postage. E-mail to **pat_woodliffe @hotmail.com** or write to **196 Sinclair Road, Chingford, London E4 8PT**.

Owen Woodliffe

New member

A warm welcome is extended to the following new member who have recently joined:

Colin Brown of Harlow - 1004

Richard Delahoy

Group Directory

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

New members may join from any month during the year, but subscriptions will always run to December, from whichever month the member chooses. Those joining from February to December inclusive will pay a pro-rata subscription calculated at **£1.70** per month. E.g., a member joining in March would pay 10 x £1.70; i.e. £17.

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

Richard Delahoy, 272 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 the Essex County Council timetable book and bus map. Send your details and a cheque for £12 to

Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road,
Southend on Sea SS1 3TT.

Subscriptions can start with any issue of the book (usually three a year) and will be renewable annually at the same time as your Group membership subscription is due.

PUBLICATION SALES

Send orders for publications to:

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

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

BLACK & WHITE PHOTO SALES

▶ ***please note new address***

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

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

lynw@barrons-bds.com

Stephensons' Third Southend Heritage Bus Running Day

Friday January 1st saw another highly successful running day in Southend and the surrounding area, with an eclectic mix of old and modern buses. A heavy frost and a light sprinkling of snow (much worse in Colchester, for the three buses coming from there) did not bode well, but the sun soon came out (not very helpful for photographers in many locations!) although the temperature hovered just above freezing all day. At least it stayed dry!

The full list of vehicles participating is shown below and included the surprise appearance of former London Transport Metrobus M1, now in Ensign's heritage fleet. Southend Transport coach contrasts were provided by Ensign's Tiger/Duple Caribbean and Aspen Bussing's Van Hool Astromega, both stalwarts of the X1 route 25 years ago. Highly popular were the two trips to Canewdon over the current Stephensons 60 route but reviving the traditional route number 12, with both Ensign's Cravens RT and Paul Ashman's Bristol RE carrying near capacity loads.

Southend Transport historically had strong contacts with fellow Essex municipal Colchester Borough, so it was appropriate to see Talisman's Atlantean resplendent in CBT livery, and one of Network Colchester's pair of Dennis Tridents recently transferred from Arriva Northumbria.

As well as the Trident, the modern scene was represented by Regal's 08 plate ex demonstrator MAN, whose attractive lines and interior attracted favourable comments from passengers used to more mundane Darts on the Eastwood Road corridor, and by Stephensons' own two latest Scania/Optare Olympus deckers, 09 and 59 plated.

For many though (your author included), the highlight was the return of ex Southend Transport Leyland Fleetline 233, freshly repainted into ST blue and cream and with newly applied crests and fleetnames (indeed, these were only applied the previous lunchtime!) and re-trimmed in a very close approximation of the red moquette used on ST's newer Fleetlines. Only the legal lettering gave away that this was Stephensons of Essex and not Southend Transport reincarnated.

Vehicle roll call:

424 DCD	424	Stephensons of Essex	Leyland PD3/Northern Counties, ex Southdown
MRJ 233W	233	Stephensons of Essex	Leyland Fleetline/Northern Counties, ex Southend Transport
K872 CSF	972	Stephensons of Essex	Leyland Olympian/Alexander, ex Lothian
K890 CSF	990	Stephensons of Essex	Leyland Olympian/Alexander, ex Lothian
EU09 AUK	502	Stephensons of Essex	Scania N230/Optare Olympus (control bus)
EU59 BHX	503	Stephensons of Essex	Scania N230/Optare Olympus
P937 MKL	5937	Arriva Southend	Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties (spare bus)
CCG 376 (ex C256 FHJ)		Aspen Bussing	Van Hool Astromega, ex Southend Transport
123 CLT	RM1123	Autocar	AEC Routemaster/Park Royal, ex LT
JXC 194	RT1431	Ensign Bus	AEC Regent 3/Cravens, ex LT
UFM 53F	ERG53	Ensign Bus/P Ashman	Bristol RELL6G/ECW, ex Crosville
THX 101S	M1	Ensign Bus	MCW Metrobus, ex LT
A250 SVW	250	Ensign Bus	Leyland Tiger/Duple, ex Southend Transport
JJD 466D	RML2466	Hardy Miles Travel	AEC Routemaster/Park Royal, ex LT
W396 RBB	196	Network Colchester	Dennis Trident/Alexander, ex Arriva Northumbria
G604 KTX		NIBS	Scania N113/Alexander, ex Cardiff
WX08 DFN		Regal Busways	MAN NL273F/Wrights, ex demonstrator
RVW 90W	90	Talisman Coachlines	Leyland Atlantean/ECW, ex Colchester
ALD 871B	SRM7	Timebus	AEC Routemaster/Park Royal, ex LT



Canewdon contrasts

A highlight of the day was the opportunity for a country ride out to the wilds of Canewdon; some people even went twice! Seen near Stambridge, the first trip featured Ensign's Cravens bodied RT1431 (JXC 194) crewed by Chris Stewart and Duncan Law, contrasting with Paul Ashman's ex Crosville Bristol RELL, seen roaring through Southend Travel Centre. It may have a Gardner engine but sounds more like a Leyland! Russell Young/Richard Delahoy





Colchester contrasts

Talisman's *ex CBT Atlantean/ECW,* ***90*** *(RVW90W) stands in the Travel Centre after arrival from Rayleigh Station, whilst* ***Network Colchester 196*** *(W396 RBB) lays over before departure to Canvey on the 3. As with a number of buses running on the 1st, it features electronic blinds specially programmed for the day's operations. Richard Delahoy (both)*





Recreating the days of Southend's massive coach fleet, Leyland Tiger/Duple Caribbean 250 (A250SVW) arrives in Southend, piloted by Ross Newman, with Jonathan Bale conducting for the day. [Chris Stewart]

A vanishing sight - the rear "bustle", characteristic of the Leyland Atlantean and the Daimler/ Leyland Fleetline (and a few Bristol VRs). Talisman's Colchester 90 contrasts with Stephensons' Southend 233. [Chris Stewart]



Services operated comprised:

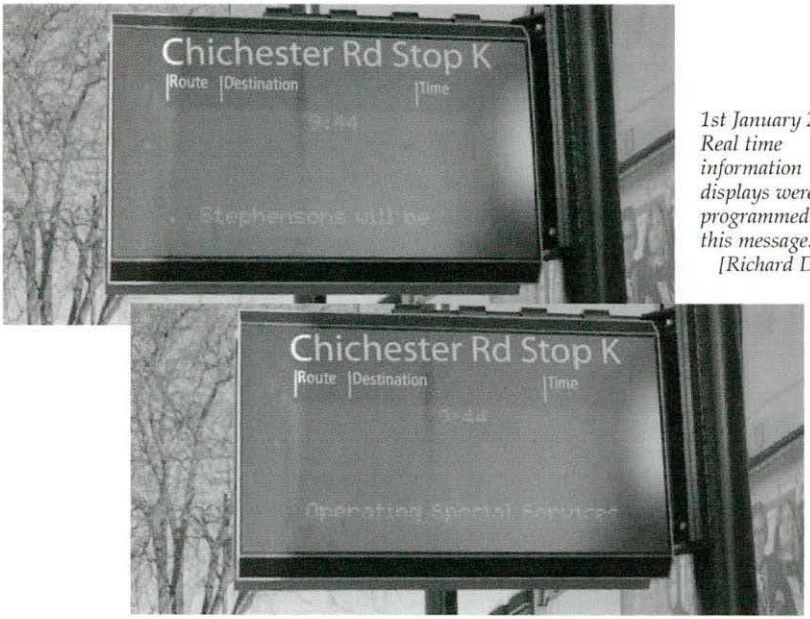
3: Southend - Hadleigh - Tarpots - Benfleet - Castle Point Transport Museum. Every 30 mins.
4: Southend - Southchurch Road - Bournes Green, hourly
6: Southend - Southchurch Road - Hamstel Road, hourly
7: Shoebury East Beach - Thorpe Bay - Southend (half-hourly), continuing hourly to Rochford and Ashingdon Schools.
12: Southend - Sutton - Rochford - Canewdon; two trips.
21: Southend - Westcliff, General Hospital; hourly.
61: Southend - Fossetts Park (B&Q), hourly.
251: Southend - Kent Elms - Eastwood Road - Rayleigh Station. Hourly.

Overall, around 1,700 passenger journeys were made, up 11% on last year. Profits from the day of £1,300 are being donated to charities supported by the operators, including Essex Air Ambulance, MacMillan Nurses, Cancer Research UK, Help for Heroes and the Wickford War Memorial Association.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of the operators and crews - grateful thanks are due to all who gave up their time to provide a thoroughly professional service.

Finally, as the organiser for the third year running, this year I was delighted and relieved to be assisted by a small committee of mainly EBEG members, comprising Jonathan Bale, Paul Brain, Matthew Evans, David Harman, Steven Hughes, Philip Mansbridge, Toby Prescott and Ian Ransom - a very big thank you to you all!

Richard Delahoy



1st January 2010: Real time information displays were programmed with this message. [Richard Delahoy]

Publicity News

Further items issued in 2009 and not previously recorded :-

Essex County Council timetable leaflets for services 11 (Highwoods – North Station) dated 6th April 2009, 15 (Colchester – Shrub End) dated 6th April 2009, 83 dated 6th April 2009

First Overground style leaflets for service 5 (Basildon-Pitsea) dated August 2009; 8/A/B/C dated 01.03.09; 61 dated October 2009, 62 cover dated ?? October 2009 (actual date was 4th October), 64/A dated October 2009, 66 dated 7th October 2009, 67/A dated 7th December 2009.

Standard First format leaflets for services 88/A dated 5th April 2009.

Stansted Aircoach leaflet for service X22 dated 1st November 2009.

A change from normal format has seen Overground style leaflets issued for "out of town" services 31/X, including 31B, 31C and 31D dated 06.12.09 and 36 also dated 06.12.09.

Ensignbus booklet for services 22/33/44/66/73/83 and X80 dated 5th September 2009. A5 leaflet with picture of RT624 for Vintage Buses Serices X55 and X80 dated 5th December 2009.

Stephensons 44 page timetable booklet for Maldon Area Services (including those of other operators) dated December 2009.

Undated leaflet for **Colchester Borough Card**

Items obtained from the First enquiry office in Colchester and not detailed recently are:-

Essex County Council leafets for VillageLink 2 dated 8th April 2007, 2C dated 11th June 2006, 3/4 dated 8th April 2007, 20/A/22/A dated 23rd July 2007, 50/92 dated 30th August 2009, 78/X dated 1st September 2008, 105/107/109 dated 7th January 2008; 175 dated 2nd January 2007.

Ian Ransom

Bus operators in Essex on the web

First Essex	*www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/southeast/essex/*
Arriva Southend }	*www.arrivabus.co.uk/*
Arriva East Herts & Essex }	
Network Colchester	*www.networkcolchester.co.uk/*
Excel Passenger Logistics	*www.excelcoaches.co.uk/*
Cedrics Coaches	*www.cedriccoaches.com/*
H C Chambers & Sons	*www.chamberscoaches.co.uk/*
Clintona	*www.clintona.co.uk/*
Constables Coaches	*www.constablecoachesltd.co.uk/*
Ensign Bus	*http://ticketslondon-online.biz/*
Essex County Buses	*www.essexcountybuses.com/*
Executive Minibuses	*www.executiveminibuses.com/*
Florida Coaches	*www.coachcompany.co.uk/*
Fords Coaches	*www.fordscoaches.co.uk/*
Hedingham Omnibuses	*www.hedingham.co.uk/*
Imperial Bus	*www.imperialbus.co.uk/*
Nelsons (NIBS)	*www.nibsbuses.co.uk/*
Regal Busways	*www.regalbusways.com/*
Renown Coaches	*www.renowncoaches.co.uk/*
SM Coaches	*www.smcoaches.co.uk/*
Stephensons of Essex	*www.stephensonsofessex.com/*
Viceroy of Essex	*www.viceroycoaches.co.uk/*

Service changes

Arriva Southend			
5 Dec 09	**370**	D	Lakeside to Romford revisions to timetable.
Centrebus			
1 Jan 10	**354**	M-F	Harlow to Buntingford service withdrawn.
Essex County Buses			
5 Jan 10	**70**	M-S	Colchester to Braintree new service.
Excel			
25 Jan 10	**X3**	D	Stansted Airport to Grays revised timetable.
	X5	D	Stansted Airport to Ipswich revised timetable
	X6	D	Stansted Airport to Colchester service withdrawn.
First Essex			
7 Feb 10	**X40**	D	Stansted Airport to Basildon service withdrawn.
Hedingham			
25 Jan 10	**136**	M-F	Jaywick to Clacton revised route to serve Meadowview Holiday Park and Clacton Shopping Centre.
Nelsons (NIBS)			
1 Feb 10	**12**	Schs	Billericay to Shotgate school service withdrawn.
Regal Busways			
4 Jan 10	**H1**	S	Harlow to Loughton new service.
2 Feb 10	**N1**	FS	Basildon Festival Park to Canvey Island service withdrawn.
	N2	FS	Basildon Festival Park to Brentwood service withdrawn.
SM Coaches			
18 Jan 10	**SM19**	M-F	Epping Station to Harlow service to operate Mondays to Saturdays and extended to Ongar. (updated information).
25 Jan 10	**14A**	M-S	Harlow Circular new service serving The Pinnacles, Bus and Rail Station.
8 Feb 10	**M15/31**	M-S	Harlow Town Services revision to timetables.
Snowdrop Travel			
2 Nov 09	**X1**	M-F	Southend to London new coach service.
Stephensons			
25 Jan 10	**621**	Schs	Rayne to Chelmsford St John Payne revision to timetable.
1 Feb 10	**1/A**	M-F	Pitsea to Basildon revision to timetable.
Travel with Hunny			
21 Dec 09	**55**	M-F	Harlow to Loughton new service.
4 Jan 10	**55**	M-F	Harlow to Loughton revised route and timetable.

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



The H1 saga continues: *Although competition from TWH ceased during mid-year,* ***Imperial*** *withdrew their Loughton to Harlow service on 18 December. Northern Counties Dart* ***H107 HHV*** *is at Bell Common during last week of operation. Whilst TWH is to reintroduce their Route 55 on weekdays,* ***Regal*** *operate a Essex County Council tender for Saturdays. MCV Evolution* ***AE55 EHM*** *turns into Epping Station approach road on 19 December. [Owen Woodliffe]*





A very unusual loan from First Eastern Counties at Ipswich was Volvo B6/Plaxton ***48085*** *(M585 ANG), which reintroduced 'Barbie 2' livery to Basildon depot (it is now found only on Mercedes 51803). The stranger was seen in Brentwood on 5th January during a brief spell during which the snow had melted. Originally intended to be registered M413 TET, this was one of a batch destined for the abortive Mainline (Sheffield) competitive services in Ipswich. [Chris Stewart]*

20352 *(WA05 UNE), one of the new coaches for the X22, cascaded from First Eastern Counties, but new to First Devon & Cornwall. Colchester North Station; 9 January 2010. [Russell Young]*



■ FIRST ESSEX BUSES LTD

Acquired vehicles

Tridents 33152/64/8/9 are shown on the latest allocation list with 33155 having moved on. With the exception of 33153, we believe that all of the 51/02 plate Tridents originally intended for *First Essex* will be going to *FEC* in exchange for 23 of their T and V registered examples. 33153 (fitted with Euro 4 engine) has gone direct to *First Berkshire* and *FEC* have received 33146 in lieu of this. 33165 is reported to have arrived at Clacton during January; this currently makes five in Essex, which are expected to be fitted with Hanover destination displays before departing for service with *First Eastern Counties*.

Several FEC vehicles have been operating on loan, as given below under 'Area News'. The Solos at Norwich have also been noted on various routes other than the 9, although this variety is only likely to be short term until the Norwich LEZ comes into force.

It has been brought to my attention that EBN544 refers to the arrival of 41237 (S237KLM) whereas this should read 41238 (S238KLM). 41237 has never been destined for Essex and is in fact now in Glasgow.

Allocation changes

Period 9: list dated 27th December 2009

These are, and always have been, taken from the Company's allocation sheet. For operational reasons there may sometimes be discrepancies with the actual situation on the ground.

FGC=First Group cascade, i.e. transfer to/from another First fleet; FEC=First Eastern Counties (A)=acquired, including vehicles on loan; Anc=Ancillary fleet; RES=reserve (spare/retained, licensed); D/L(S)=spare/retained (delicensed); D/L(D)=delicensed for disposal; DS=Driving School; PS=Paint Spare

20102 RES-FEC; 20500 RES-FEC; 20501 RES-FEC; 47102 RES-CF; 47105 D/L(D)-sold; 56004 RES-FGC; 62409 CR-CN; 65691 CN-CR

41637 (R637VLM) was shown incorrectly in EBN548 as transferring CF-BN but has in fact been deleted from stock after fire damage. Component recovery took place at HH (with the gearbox going into 46151 and engine to 43800) after which the remains were removed by Erith Commercials w/c 14th December.

Disposals:

to *First Scotland East* (Midland Bluebird Ltd) 56004
to Erith Commercials: 46144 46147 47103 (Period 8 – see EBN548), 41637 47105 (Period 9)

Repaints:

Period 8: 65628 42920 42931 65632 42928 65631 65630
Period 9: none

46155 has gained LED destination display

Area News - workings and sightings

[x] indicates route branding

Clacton (CN) & Harwich (DT)

On Wednesday 6th January, Harwich-Colchesters were taking about four hours and

Clactons about three hours. Enviros were taken off Harwich town services and 34280/6/90 were used instead on 20 (no 20A) and 22s. Things were a little better on Thursday 7th, but no buses ran from DT on Friday 8th after the first Colchester journey turned back. Roads had been cleared by the next morning, which started with a full service but more heavy snow by midday meant all buses were off the road by 16.00. On Sunday 10th a full service was running except that 102s were not operating via Dedham, nor 3s via Beaumont or Meadow View at Clacton.

December
1st DT42937 on CN74
28th (Sunday service) CN57001 and DT65651 on ECC 102, DT44516 on 3
29th CN57001 still at DT (DT44517 away at ADL for accident damage repairs)
30th FEC 20102 (only recent ex *First Essex*) and 20124 (P734NVG) on loan for X22

Colchester (CR)
Owing to heavy snowfall on 18th December, *First* services from BE, CN, CR and DT were initially suspended but limited operations from CN (on 74 & 76) were noted from approx 08.00 and from CR after about 08.30, including X22. CF were running from about 07.30 and by lunchtime most mid/north Essex operations appeared to be normal, although various vehicles were noted on unscheduled "positioning" journeys and DT's 10/11 were not operating via Jaywick sea front (instead terminating at the Sheldrake).

December
2nd CR34014 on 63
4th CR34307 and CR65691 on 63, CR34309 and CR65679 on 70
7th DT34288 on CR64, CR34308 on 63 - deckers now becoming more common on 63, CR65674 on 70, CR66816 on 71
8th CR67005 on 64, CR62409 on X22, CR62410 and CR65678 on 70
10th CR67010 on 65
11th DT34288 on CR65; 46120 on 74
15th CR34315 on 65
16th 46120 on 75
17th CR34013 on 63, CR34308 on 65
18th CF43357 on CF70 –first recorded sighting of an MPD working to CR; CR65682 on X22 (duplicate), CN65691 on CR65
20th CF43360 seen stabled in CR bus station, CR62409 on CN X22
22nd 46120 on 76/75 CR-Tiptree
24th CR30558 on 64, CR62410 on 70, CR65680 on 72
31st CR65653 on 71

Chelmsford (CF) & Braintree (BE)
December
4th CF42936 on 46, CF46132 on 33, CF53125 on 48
5th BN66820, CF69434 on DLR Canary Wharf-London City Airport rail replacement
6th BN65671, CF66797/8, BN66813/9/24 and CF66830 on DLR Canary Wharf-London City Airport rail replacement
7th CF42934 on 46, BE43357 on 54, BE43801 on 31X (14.05 to Burnham), CF46132 on 51 (14.17 to Chignall Estate), CF46140 on 70, CF47101 on 54 (14.15 to Wicklow Avenue) and CF47102 on 40 (14.12 to Gt Baddow)
8th CF42934 on 46, BE43802 on 132
9th BN41240 on 50, BE43357 on 51, CF46140 on 45, CF46132 on 51, CF47102 on 351, CF53124 on 46,CF66795 on 33
10th CF42487 on 70 then 48, BE43360 on 46, BE43802 on 40, CF53121 on 21
15th BN41241 still working at CF, BE43802 on 41
17th CF42483 on 70, CF66837 on 33



Basildon's MPD Dart ***43846*** *heads along Hazelwood Gardens in Pilgrim's Hatch on the cross town Brentwood 73/73A service during the first snow of 18th December. A letter to the Brentwood Gazette praises the driver of a 73 in "terrible weather" a few days later for his "cheery and helpful disposition", keeping the passengers cheerful on board despite the inevitable delays. [Chris Stewart]*

Red deckers in the snow: First London *Trident/Plaxton* ***33056*** *awaits departure on the 09.10 to Lakeside while behind it Trident/Enviro 400* ***33557*** *has worked in on a 498 schools duty and will return empty. Double deckers are, however, used in the daytime on the 498 from time to time. Brentwood Sainsbury's; 6 Jan 2010. [Chris Stewart]*





Illustrating the appalling conditions that buses had to contend with in teh recent snows. Notably on a Sunday morning, a 2C, 2 x 65, a 74 and a 102, were all running within 10 minutes of time. ***65687*** *in Severalls Lane, Colchester on 20 Dec 09. [Russell Young]*

First has diverted service 26 to serve Thames Drive, Leigh Station, Leigh Church and Leigh Broadway. On the first day after the snow, Olympian ***31456*** *was seen on the 26.... the first time in almost 20 years that a closed-top double-decker has been allocated to all-day work in Thames Drive. The indicator display wasn't quite so good .... showing 'Sorry bus station, via London Road'!*

[John G Lidstone]



19th BE43360 on 70 (replacing 69434 with broken window)
21st BE42482 on 56, BE42487 on 42 and BE43357 on 47, CF66799 on X30 (12.00 ex SD)
22nd CF42920/3, BE42483 on 42, BE42487 on 54, BE42489 on 33, BE43360 on 70 and BE43802 on 50
23rd BE43357 on 42, BE43801 on 33
31st CF47102 on 42, CF47252 on 351

January
3rd CF34818 at BE
4th CF43744 on 31 (first sighting following long-awaited transfer)
7th CF53139 on 351, BE43359 on 45, CF43744 on 51, CF47101 on 47 (replacing defective 53113), CF66799 on X30

Basildon (BN) & Hadleigh (HH)
Member Peter Mansbridge was back in Rayleigh for two weeks over Christmas and has provided an update on HH Mon-Sat vehicle workings since the service changes back in October. With the removal of all branding from vehicles at HH, ex Glasgow/London Dart SLF/East Lancs and Dart SLF/Plaxton (R-DJN, S-TWC) are all common on routes 2, 21, 22, 26 and 27. Service 21 now interworks with service 20 at Southend, reducing and possibly eliminating at certain times dead running between HH and Southend for service 20 vehicles in the daytime.

The remaining step entrance Darts appear to be concentrated on routes 20/21 with approx 50% of workings generally step Dart and 50% low floor Darts (of any type). Route 24 remains step entrance Dart operated. Also loaned First Eastern Counties Volvo B6 48085 (M585ANG) worked service 25 to Southend on 2nd Jan, working at least 11.00/14.30 ex Basildon Hospital and 12.45/16.15 ex Southend.

After the snowfall of 18th December, most services were running normally by mid-day although 20s were operating direct via Eastwood Road instead of Clarence Rd/Grove Rd/Jubilee Rd/Bull Lane, 21 was not operating via Canvey Road in Leigh-On-Sea and 24 remained suspended.

December
7th BN65667 on 100
15th BN66821 on 82
21st BN65665 working service 25, (17.20 ex SD). Services disrupted much of the day by heavy traffic, first day of children's holiday and poor weather condition - this type of vehicle unusual on weekdays
24th HH31456 on 26 (first reported closed top DD in Thames Drive for 20 years)
30th BN43744 on 100
31st 46120 on 100, HH46155 on 24, HH46180/1 on 21

January
4th 46120 on 81/82 (and 7th)
5th FEC48085 on 81/82 and 551
7th BN41235 on 100

Other News
New Year offers include discounted season tickets on service 42 and 70 (both of which are the subject of competition from Essex County Buses) offering savings of around 10% on the 70 and 15% on the 42.

Cheetah 56004 (EY54BPZ) has joined the *First Scotland East* fleet at Galashiels and is now in

'Barbie 1' bus livery. It has apparently replaced Dart 40910 (N616XJM) and, although presumably required because of its seat belts for a school contract, it has been seen on the Peebles town service.

Abus of Bristol's VR XHK221X (3116) has had its overheating problem dealt with by Bulwark Bus & Coach Engineering at Chepstow and saw service on their Tuesdays Keysham-Wells 683 and Wednesdays Bath-Weston 791 during the last two weeks of December. Unfortunately the wipers failed on 30th December but on 29th it had met with preserved Bristol RELL6L OHU770F in Wells.

Meanwhile former 3082 (STW26W), which also served in Bristol and was exported by Mundens, is in use with the Big Red Bus Co in Long Beach, California after performing the 'Brit Bus Tour' from New York to California (see *www.bcv.robsly.com/stw26w.html)*

First Essex official vehicle allocation list as at 27 December 2009
Excludes ancillary vehicles except Driving School

Basildon (69):	31373-5, 34011/2, 41235/8-41, 41640/5/50/1/3, 43800/45-8, 46167/70-2/84/5, 46827/8, 56005/8/9, 60103/4, 65626-32, 65665-71, 66800/1/3-6/3/19-27, 67001/2/9/12/3
Braintree (15):	31198, 42482-9, 43357-60, 43801/2 [actual allocation varies daily due to maintenance at CF]
Chelmsford (88):	20463, 20801-5, 34815/8, 40733/4/6-8, 41647, 42918-23/7-36, 43744, 46132/40, 47101/2/4, 47252, 53112-6/24-39, 65028-32, 66794-9, 66802/7-10/8/28-30/7, 68521/32/4/5/51/2/5, 69434
Clacton (23):	20351-3, 34311/4, 41642/4, 43739-43, 47223-6/8/9, 57001/2, 62409, 65690/2
Colchester (64):	30558/60, 34013/4/8/56, 34285/90, 34301-5/7-10/5, 60755-8, 61054/7, 62406-8/10, 65650/3/4, 65672-89/91, 66811/2/4-7, 60102, 67003-8/10/1
Hadleigh (66):	31376, 31456/62, 40777-9, 41005-17, 42439, 42852-5/7, 43712-21/9-31, 46145/6/51-8/68/9/74/5/6-83
Harwich (12):	34280/2/4/6/8, 42937, 44516-9, 65651/2
Driving school (5):	60117, 60304/5/19/21
Heritage vehicles (2):	38790, 90230
Reserve/spare (6):	33152/64/8/9, 46120, 51803
Delicensed for disposal (2):	47105/6

Sources: Own observations, with many thanks to *First Essex* and to P Ashton, D Ballantyne, A Bird, N Clark, T Clark, J Collins, D Edwards, M Farmer, J G Lidstone, A R MacFarlane, J Podgorski, D Pretty, I Ransom, J Salmon, 'Solo', TBL177M, A Timms, R Wansbury, R West, the *Essex, East Anglia, South West* and *British Buses Abroad in North America* y-groups, *Essex* and *East Anglia* Google groups, www.buslistsontheweb.co.uk, *Real Bus News*, LOTS, PSV Circle, *'Terminus' and Bristol VR South West Bus News* (http://ndl642m.blogspot.com).

Reports relating to First Group may be sent by text on 07973 509459, by e-mail or by conventional post. Many thanks to all who do so, and for your good wishes at Christmas and New Year - unfortunately a close family bereavement precluded some individual responses.

Chris Stewart

Arriva

■ **ARRIVA SOUTHEND LTD.**
3247 (P247 MKN) Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton B40F had arrived by 7th December. This has replaced the last step-entrance single deck at Southend 3019 (N539 TPF) Dennis Dart/East Lancs which was in use as a training vehicle at Maidstone by mid December.

The only step-entrance vehicles now at Southend are Volvo Olympians 5934-7.

Previously unreported is Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton 3281 (T281 JKM) which entered service back in October. This was reported as destined for Southend in EBN539. Unreported as withdrawn is step-entrance Dennis Dart/Plaxton 3409 (P329 HVX) with engine failure in early September.

From 14th - 19th December, 14 Arriva Southend drivers drove their buses dressed as fairytale or Disney characters to raise money for two charities: Peaceful Place (caring and supporting younger people with onset dementia) and Amazing Daisy (for Gt. Ormond St. and Neptune Ward of Southend Hospital).

Former Southend Transport Routemaster 115 (WLT 378) is now preserved by TravelGreen of Doncaster, fully restored to original LT livery and condition, and used for private hire. The bus has its own purpose-built, carpeted(!) garage.

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



Former Arriva Southend/Southend Transport Volvo Olympian/NC N708 TPK, now ***Arriva North West 3353****, departing Macclesfield Bus Station for Crewe on 12th December. [Peter Mansbridge]*

TGM Group

■ NETWORK COLCHESTER

Vehicles In

From Excel:

867 (N167 PUT), 873 (N433 XRC), Scania 113CRL/East Lancs B51F.

867 was new to Midland Fox, 873 was new to Derby City Transport.

867 and 873 are at Colchester for operation of service 133 (Braintree – Stansted Airport), which Network Colchester has operated on Monday to Fridays since 27th November. Excel retains operation of the route at weekends. Both vehicles are in TGM livery, but without fleetnames.

Omnidekkas 101/2 were used on a rail replacement service between Twickenham and Feltham in South west London for a week from 17th November following the collapse of a rail bridge after heavy rain.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Richard Delahoy, John Podgorski and Keith Sadler,

Centrebus / Trustybus / Galleon Travel

The former Trustline/Galleon Travel fleet has now been numbered in the Centrebus system:

150	M150 HPL	Dennis Dart	Plaxton	B40F	now withdrawn
161	L161 XRH	Dennis Dart	Plaxton	B34F	
367	V110 LVH	Optare Solo	Optare	B31F	
452	LSK 607	MB 0814D	Plaxton	C24F	formerly X216 HCD
509	P131 PPV	Dennis Dart SLF	East Lancs	B42F	
513	S522 KFL	Dennis Dart SLF	Marshall	B27F	
514	S528 KFL	Dennis Dart SLF	Marshall	B27F	
515	R711 MEW	Dennis Dart SLF	Marshall	B28F	
541	LN03 AYL	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton	B37F	
542	LN03 AYM	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton	B37F	
543	AE55 MVL	ADL Dart SLF	MCV	B41F	
544	EU04 BZY	ADL Dart SLF	Plaxton	B29F	
545	AE55 VGD	ADL Dart SLF	MCV	B40F	
547	AE06 HBU	ADL Dart SLF	MCV	C33F	
548	AE06 HBX	ADL Dart SLF	MCV	C33F	
549	LK07 GTF	ADL Dart SLF	Enviro 200	B29F	
562	R462 LGH	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton	B35F	
584	R484 LGH	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton	B35F	
610	R141 RLY	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton	B??F	
653	WX05 NFY	MAN	Ayats	CH59/16FT	
764	YN06 CKY	Scania K114	Irizar	C49FT	
765	YN07 LFT	Scania K340	Irizar	C49FT	
766	YN08 MOA	Scania K340	Irizar	C49FT	
767	M267 VPU	Dennis Lance SLF	Wright	B40F	
768	M268 VPU	Dennis Lance SLF	Wright	B40F	
769	P10 TLS	MAN 11.190	Optare Vecta	B39F	

Four new Scania/Wright Solar buses are due for route C3, the first two being YR59 NNU/T.

Ian Ransom with thanks to the PSV Circle

Ensignbus

■ DEALER STOCK MOVEMENTS

Vehicles in

	from
Alpha Travel:	RML882
First Berkshire:	Scania/Berkhof coaches N795/8 WAN
Hookways Coaches:	Scania SJI 8117 (was H223 LOM)
Lothian Buses:	Olympians P256/7/9/61/2/78 PSX
Stagecoach East Kent:	Olympians L828 BKK, K823/4 TKP, J813 NKK
Stagecoach East:	Olympian R702 DNH
Stagecoach Highlands:	Javelins N865/6 XMO
Wilts and Dorset:	Spectras K107/8 VLJ, L118/29 ALJ, M133 HPR, M137 KRU
Private owner:	RM577

Vehicles out

	to
Scania SJI 8117:	**AOT Travel**, Nottingham
Volvo B6 L833 YDS, B10B M102 UKX:	**Jim Bell Coaches**, Hull
Volvo B10B M577 WTJ:	**Bugler Coaches**, Bristol
Spectras M137/41/5 KRU, M133 HPR:	**Cedrics Coaches**, Wivenhoe, Essex
Dart EU06 KPA:	**Central Buses**, Birmingham
Trident V125 MEV:	**Confidence Coaches**, Leicester
Olympian P271 PSX:	**Hookways Coaches**, Exeter
Olympians L826-30 BKK:	**Johnsons Coaches**, Hodthorpe
Olympian L682 HNV:	**Linburg Bus and Coach**, Sheffield
Volvo B10B M551 WTJ:	**Stathams Coaches**, Ibstock, Leicester
Volvo B10B M524 WHF:	**Tates Travel**, Barnsley
RM577:	**Michael Fuller**, Rushden, Beds.
Trident V120 MEV:	**Anthem Productions**, Barnsley
Olympian P420 KSX:	**Elemis Ltd**, Harrow Weald, Middx.
Dart N412 MBW:	**Trident 2001 Ltd**, Thurrock, Essex
Olympian F285 DRJ:	**UFO Leisure**, Northampton
RML2534/2365:	**Ambassatours**, Halifax , Novia Scotia

■ ENSIGNBUS CO. LTD.

Disposals

Olympian 136 (S136 RLE) has been withdrawn and sold to Rambler Coaches, Hastings.

■ ENSIGN HERITAGE FLEET

RML882, restored to original condition and Class VI standard is now in the Heritage fleet.

■ CITY SIGHTSEEING

Two Volvo B9TL/Optare have been ordered to replace Bath Bus Company-based Volvo/Ayats open tops, EU04 CUW and EU04 CZR. These have been sold to Garden of Eden, Malta, for use on the Malta City Sightseeing service.

David Harman, with thanks to Ross Newman of Ensign Bus Co. Ltd.

Essex County Buses

Operation of service 70 between Colchester and Braintree commenced on 5th January, running every 30 minutes, Monday to Saturday.

Reports on the first day suggest that only three vehicles were in use (being the newly-acquired ex-Arriva Southend Dart and ex-Ipswich Excel, plus existing Dart SLF/MCV AE08 DLF), compared to the five required to maintain a 30 minute service. No electronic displays had been programmed, paper sheets being used instead. The former Stansted Transit Delta has also been seen on the route.

All four recent acquisitions are in the red/cream livery but without the "?" fleetnames. The competition to design a logo ended on 30th November.

Acquired vehicles

1191	P191 SGV	Optare Excel L1150	Optare B38F	ex Ipswich Buses 191
1710	K710 KGU	Dennis Dart	Plaxton Pointer B35F	ex-Stansted Transit
3145	L145 YVK	Dennis Dart	Northern Counties B35F	ex Arriva Southend 3145
	G957 KJX	DAF SB220	Optare Delta B47F	ex-Stansted Transit

Ian Ransom, PSV Circle

Hedingham Omnibuses

Unusual sightings
Week commencing 7th December: Olympian L364 (K107 JWJ) at Little Tey outstation covering for Lynx L200 (J295 TWK) undergoing MOT.

Traffic
Honywood school bus 6 reverted to its normal route from Monday 7th December.
On 18th December, due to heavy snowfall, all stage services were initially suspended, whilst many school services did not run as schools were closed. Tollesbury depot suffered a power cut. Service 88 was noted operating from approx 0900.

John Podgorski

National Express

■ NATIONAL EXPRESS OPERATIONS

Traffic
On 30th December, services to/from Stansted that use the M11 were badly disrupted, after the M11 was closed between Birchanger and Harlow, after a lorry crashed and its load of pigs escaped and ran across both carriageways.

John Podgorski

NIBS

New: 12/09: EU59 BFK, Scania N230/Optare Olympus H41/29F, as per previous new deliveries but with one additional seat downstairs.

Reinstaed: Olympian C51 CHM and Dominator H258 MFX are in use again, due to a shortage of vehicles [including accident damage to one Trident].

Disposals: H241 LOM was removed by insurers following scorch damage from fire in scrapyard adjacent to storage yard. H247 LOM to Wigley, Carlton for scrap 12/09 following engine/gearbox failure. Olympian C73 CHM was sold to Regal Busways early this year.

Chris Stewart



Seen in Billericay en route for Wickford during its first week in service, ***EU59 BFK*** *is a further Scania/Optare Olympus. [Chris Stewart with thanks to Steve Nelson]*

Olympian / SM Coaches

■ **OLYMPIAN**

Acquired from GPC International, Newport Pagnell is MKZ 6312 (T267 KHH) an Iveco 391/Beulas.

■ **SM COACHES**

New arrivals this month are

M223 AKB Dennis Dart / East Lancs EL2000 ex-Arriva Merseyside Via Hardwick, Carlton.

P721 RYL, R481/5/6 LGH Dennis Dart/Plaxton SLF ex- London General via Ensign.

Vehicles sold for scrap to Hardwick, Carlton are K408 FHJ a Dennis Dart/Plaxton and Mercedes Benz 811D/Dormobile L192 MAU

Ian Ransom and essex buses y-group

Regal Busways

Olympian C73 CHM has been acquired from NIBS; January 2010.

Ian Ransom with thanks to Chris Stewart

Stephensons of Essex

A third new Scania N230/Optare Olympus decker for Stephensons is 503, EU59 BHX, delivered early in December.

Further second-hand Olympian acquisitions are three former Dublin examples, now registered N827/8/81 FKK (ex 95 D 253/4 and 96 D 292), Volvo Olympian/Alexander, converted to single door and upseated to 78. (as an aside, their Kentish re-registrations will not look out of place in south east Essex, with around half the Arriva Southend fleet originally registered in Kent with KJ, KK, KL, KM marks and others in Surrey).

The final two ex London L class Olympians, 882/92 (C82/92 CHM), have been sold to Brijan Tours of Curdridge, Hants, where they join sister C81 CHM. The oldest Olympian, 683 (C383 CAO) is now for sale and 851-3 (E851/2/6 DPN) are also due for early disposal.

A report on the 3rd Southend Running Day on January 1st appears elsewhere in this issue, including news of the repaint of heritage Fleetline MRJ 233W.

For approximately six weeks from 5th January, Bradwell-on-Sea High Street is closed and the Dengie Connections D4 is unable to serve Waterside on Mondays to Fridays. On those days, it follows the normal route to Bradwell, King's Head, then via the D1 routing to terminate at Bate Dudley Drive, returning the same way. Essex County Council have arranged a taxi shuttle from Waterside via Trusses Road, connecting at the AMP Garage with D4 buses. Saturday D4s are unaffected.

Ian Ransom with thanks to Lyn Watson

Other Essex operators

APT COACHES, Rayleigh Recent changes of registration are Bova Futura 12-230 from R59 BJC to A12 APT and Scania K114/Irizar from YN04 GGK to PT04 APT

CEDRICS, Wivenhoe have former Wilts & Dorset Optare Spectras M137/41/5 KRU, M133 HPR, acquired via Ensign. These await repainting.

KEANE, Canvey Island Recent additions are Renault Master N663 MWS and Ford Transit X941 UAR

L&R TRANSPORT, Shotgate Acquired from Williams Travel, Camborne is CJZ 6782 (new as F108 SSE) a Volvo B10M/

Ikarus.

MORTLOCK, Linford Acquired from APT Coaches is M68 DLN a Mercedes Benz 811D/Wadham Stringer

P&M, Crays Hill Volvo B12B/Jonckhree has been re-registered from HF03 HOF to MNZ 9303

RELIANCE, Bowers Gifford Scania K310/Irizar YN07 EZA has been sold to Chalkwell, Sittingbourne

RONDA COACHES, Rochford Mercedes Benz 711D/Eurocoach BCZ 2452 (M211 ASJ) has been sold to Unity Travel, Ipswich

Ian Ransom, with thanks to Dave Arnold, Colin Sigston and the PSV Circle



On 28 November ***Dons*** *provided transport for Cookham Travel's Real Ale Ramble to visit Essex micro-breweries. Neoplan* ***YR02 UOG*** *visited Uphall Farm, Coggeshall, whose well is used by Red Fox Brewery, and Stebbing, where the White Hart received the party to sample beers of the Hart Brewery. [Owen Woodliffe]*

Donald 'Don' Hale

Don Hale, founder of Dons Coaches of Dunmow, which celebrated 60 years in business last year, died peacefully in his sleep on Christmas Eve after a short illness. He was 88.

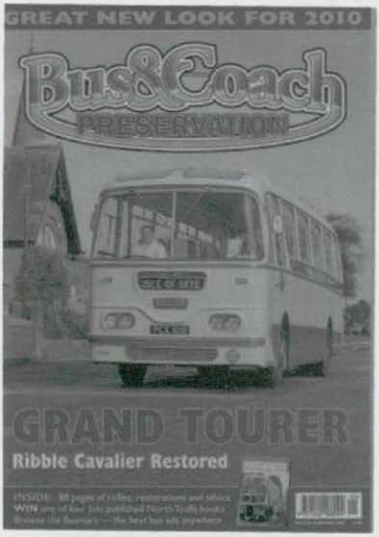
Don had started the company in 1949 after serving throughout the Second World War in the Essex Yeomanry and subsequently operating a garage and hire cars before acquisition of his first coach.

The funeral service was held at St Mary's Church, Great Dunmow on Friday 8th January. Donations may be made to The British Legion or the World Society for the Protection of Animals, one of Don's favourite aninmal charities.

with acknowledgements to Bus & Coach Buyer

The Essex bus ... in print

Bus & Coach Preservation Vol 12 No.8 - January 2010 (Presbus Publishing; £3.85)



below: 2614 departs from Victoria Coach Station on 26th September. [Chris Stewart]

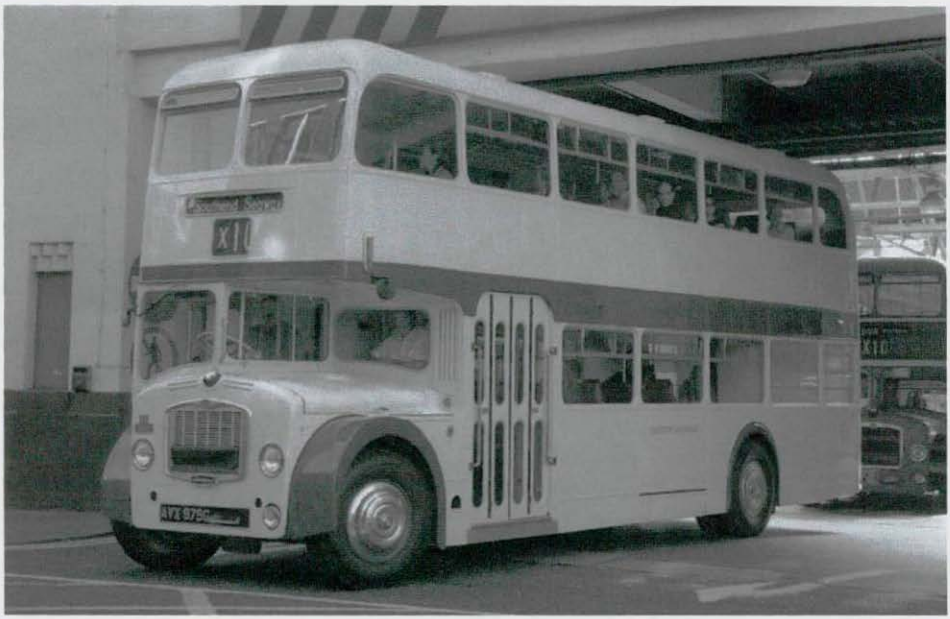
Last Lodekka Glory

We covered the triumphant return of Paul Harrison's Eastern National Lodekka coach 2614 in EBN546. In B&CP, John Lidstone provides the full story behind its restoration, a twenty-year saga.

2614 had been originally bought in its bus-converted form by Lyn Watson direct from ENOC. He obtained the official ECW interior plans which were later to prove so invaluable in the restoration, but had to eventually conclude that he would not be able to undertake the work himself. 2614 then passed to Ensigns, and a sale to a buyer in Australia for ignominous conversion to a mobile pizza parlour was in prospect. Fortuitously, the sale fell through, and subsequently Paul Harrison took the financial plunge and rescued 2614 for posterity.

The long and painstaking slog to restore it to its original condition is told in inimitable JGL style and I won't spoil a fascinating story by retelling it here. B&CP is always a good read, and Vol.12 No.8 is no exception!

David Harman



eastern national

SERVICE UPDATE : BAD WEATHER IS NOT AFFECTING BUS SERVICES



In case anyone thinks that snow and ice are recent innovations, here is a shot (by *RHG Simpson*) of an Eastern National bus braving wintry weather in Braintree Bus Park. Date uncertain, but maybe in the early-1960s.

TNO 690, a standard Bristol KSW5G with ECW L27/28R bodywork, was delivered in 1952 as 4165. It was renumbered to **1379** in the July 1954 renumbering, and to 2336 in August 1964. Withdrawal took place in September 1968. All the records I have, indicate that it was a Braintree (BE) car, at least latterly.

The blinds are set for EN's highest numbered route for many years - the 352. If we take, say, the November 1961 timetable, the route then offered an approximately hourly service to Witham, via the Notleys and Faulkbourne. Did "High Street" on the via blind refer to Braintree or Witham? In between the through journeys, there were shorts to Black Notley Hospital, and a small bifurcation at the Witham end accommodated shorts from Ebenezer Close to the High Street. The first M-F journey (at 6.50am ex the Bus Park) ran via Crittalls' Works at Witham, and the 4.30pm journey to Braintree started at the Works. The last bus ex-Braintree was at 10.30pm (10.25pm on Sundays), presumably to take cinema-goers home. The Embassy cinema was just a few yards from the Bus Park. It had opened in April 1935, replacing the Palace cinema on the same site. It still stands, but after succumbing to bingo, became a Wetherspoons hostelry in 1997.

So, would you board 1379 for the half-hour run to Witham? No heaters on a KSW if I recall correctly, but if you sat upstairs, the smoke from an army of Capstan Full Strength and Woodbine smokers built up a nice warm fug once you got going. (You could always open one of the Beclawat sliding windows with their little draught excluders for a bit of ventilation). But, who notices the cold when they have the irregular, yet reassuring beat of a Gardner 5LW to listen to?

David Harman

Transports of Delight ~ Memoirs of a Bus Anorak : 1940 to 2009

by the Revd. Terry Challis

Chapter 7 : Relations with Eastern National "Renewed Yet Again!" Part 2 : A Driving Experience - On the Town

(The previous part of this story was in Essex Bus News issue 548, December 2009)

I had passed my Public Service Vehicle (PSV) driving test on the Friday *[in June 1968]* and on Saturday morning I began my first duty at Clacton Bus Station as a driver. The first service that I worked on was the 110 (Holland-on-Sea to Jaywick Sands via Holland Road and the Hospital). This was the most tightly timed of all the town services with only two minutes turn round time at each end. However the regular bus was probably the most suitable at Clacton Garage: that is No. 2701 (81 TVX). This was, I believe, the only batch of Bristol FLFs in the fleet with the four-speed gear-box.

As when I had been a conductor at Clacton in 1965, there were three rotas; the regular crew rota, the seasonal crew rota and the OMO rota. As then, the seasonal rota covered nearly all of the town services. However the Burrsville Circular services (113/114), which had in the past been entirely single-deck and mainly OMO, were now operated by double-deckers and were on the permanent rota. For some reason two seasonal services also seemed to be kept to the permanent rota, these were the 121 'shorts' to Meadow View Camp and the 125 (to Highlands Camp). Another seasonal service, the long-standing 129 (to Valley Farm Camp) seemed to be confined to one-man-operation. Of these, the only service



*We could not find a decent shot of 2701 so hope this will do, to illustrate the vehicle Terry took on his first service drive. In this view, **2701** (81 TVX - a long-time Clacton depot resident) stands in the bus station on the 121. [Chris Stewart collection]*



Ready for another trip on the 121 to Jaywick Sands, Bristol LD Lodekka ***2485*** *(298 JHK) is typical of the buses Terry drove during the summer of 1968. [EBEG collection]*

that I worked on overtime was the 125. After a few days I was put with a regular conductor, who was also a student, and we worked together for the rest of the summer. However when working over-time I sometimes worked with other conductors. On most occasions I signed on at the Bus Station but when working the first bus of the day it was necessary to sign on at Castle Road Garage. This entailed finding the allocated bus and driving it to the Bus Station. This is where another piece of advice from the driving instructor came in. This was that the gear-box would be more difficult to operate when it was cold but, not to worry, be patient and it would soon warm up. I found this to be especially true one morning with UEV 832 (2339) which I think was originally a Chelmsford bus and one that I had probably travelled to work on ten years earlier. It was a good bus. Although slow gear changes and slow progress in traffic might be an embarrassment to a car driver, when driving a bus (or HGV) because it is so big, there is not much that anyone else can do about it if you are taking your time. Thus the slow change of a constant-mesh (crash) gear-box is not really much of a problem, in this respect at least.

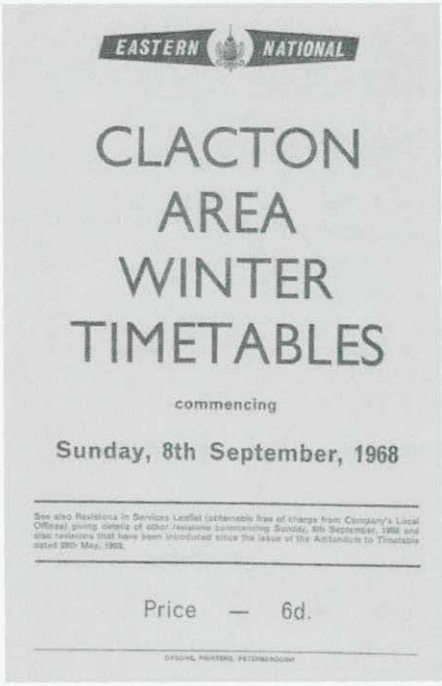
Someone, I do not know whether it was driving instructor or fellow driver, told me that it was possible to change gear with a constant-mesh gear-box without using the clutch. However it was important to get the timing and the engine revolutions just right. I tried this at 2300 (11pm) one night on the sea-front coming back from Holland-on-Sea on the last service 112. The bus was a covered top KSW. Much to my own satisfaction it worked beautifully: however I cannot see how one could start a bus from stationary without using the clutch.

The Burrsville (113/114) services were on the permanent rota and I only worked on them on overtime. The occasion that I remember was signing off at about 1400 (2pm) on a Saturday and being asked by the regulator to do a couple of Burrsville Circulars, which I agreed to do: overtime

was always welcome. The bus was 2353 (UEV 841) which was a KSW5G that had been delivered to Westcliff soon after the Eastern National take-over. It was one of the first buses delivered in green livery to Southend Garage. I had a soft spot for this bus as I could remember it being delivered to Southend when brand new. As an ex-Southend bus it seemed a little 'livelier' than ones from traditional Eastern National garages. Like many Southend buses it seemed a bit low on its near-side springs but it ran well and the two Burrsville Circulars were an easy way of earning an hour's overtime.

So what about the rest of the bus fleet at Clacton in 1968? Well, all the Bristol K5Gs and the Leyland PD1 open-toppers had gone. They had been replaced by KSW5Gs and Lodekkas of both the LD5G rear-entrance type and front entrance FLFs with Gardner 6LW or Bristol BVW engines. Nearly all the Walton services (107) were operated by FLFs. The town services were mainly in the hands of KSWs and LD5Gs.

There were also two KSW5G open-toppers which had been converted from the WNO batch of 'staggered seat' vehicles. As with all Eastern National engineering work, they had been rebuilt to a very high standard to which the preserved examples testify forty years later. The open-toppers were used on the sea front service (112). When it rained and in the evenings they were usually


EASTERN NATIONAL

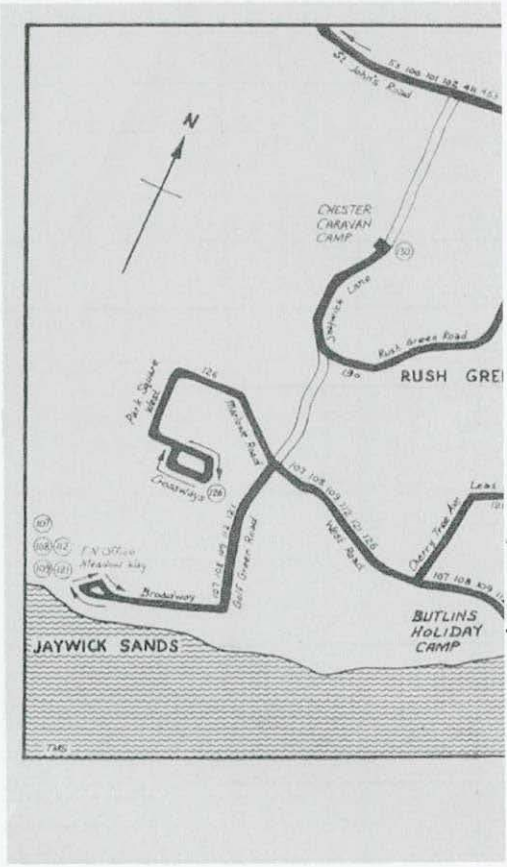
CLACTON AREA WINTER TIMETABLES

commencing

Sunday, 8th September, 1968

See also Restrictions in Services Leaflet (obtainable free of charge from Company's Local Offices) giving details of other revisions commencing Sunday, 8th September, 1968 and also revisions that have been introduced since the issue of the Addenda to Timetable dated 26th May, 1968.

Price — 6d.

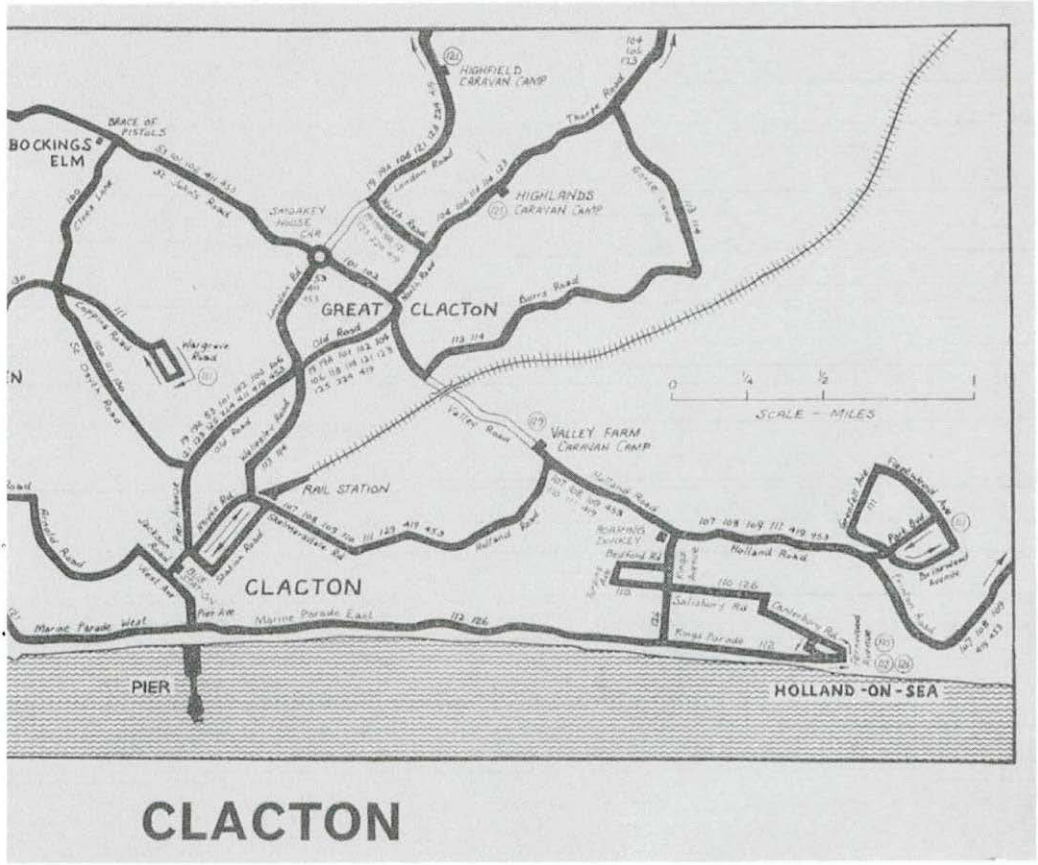


Clacton services often merited their own timetable book supplement, with the difference between summer and winter schedules - we don't have the summer 1968 one to hand, but this is the one that started just as Terry ended his stint as a seasonal driver there.

replaced by closed-top vehicles if possible: these could be other KSWs or a Lodekka of some kind (LD or FLF). The open-toppers were the best of the KSWs to drive: probably because they were only used for less than six months each year and then not in bad weather. One of these buses was an exceptionally smooth running vehicle. The engine ran 'as sweet as a nut'. There was none of the roar and clatter usually associated with Gardner 5LW engines: it was silky smooth. On one occasion it reached 39mph on the straight section of road between Butlin's and the Three Jays on the 112 service. That was flying for a KSW5G!

On one occasion I took over an FLF Lodekka on a town service which was doing a reasonable impression of steam engine: the radiator was in need of water. The radiator cap on most Bristols at this time was a flap held in position by a smaller flap. I had been told that the way to open them safely when hot was to run past it and give it a thump as I went past. Thus the flap would open but I would be out of the way if any hot water gushed out. This I did and, much to my surprise, it worked. I then poured three (!) cans of water into the radiator. Clearly the water level had not been checked for some time.

The only non-Bristol vehicle was the ex-Moores Commer 'Avenger' with TS3 engine and Yeates 'Riviera' coach body (102, 7652



VW). This coach reputedly had very heavy steering. The noise of the engine reminded me of the LS bus 400 (476 BEV) which was fitted with a Rootes TS3 engine as an experiment when new. I seem to remember that 400 had gained the nick-name 'The Banger'. I think that 400 was always a Chelmsford bus but turned up in Clacton from time to time on service 53 (Clacton to Tilbury Ferry). I travelled home from Chelmsford to Clacton on 400 in 1958 and experienced the rasping sound of the TS3 engine for over two hours. 400 was fitted with a Gardner 5HLW engine in 1960. I gather that the Foden two-stroke diesel engine has a similar reputation for noise: as indeed do GM Detroit diesels.

Although the other buses were standard Tilling group examples, besides the open-toppers and 2700, there was one other bus that merits mention. It was, I think, 2364 (VNO 859, now preserved). This was one of the three Bristol KSW5Gs built with platform doors for the long, ex-Hicks, Braintree to London service (322). These three buses also had staggered seating upstairs which they retained *[and which we illustrated in the September issue, where we incorrectly described it as VNO 857].* I imagine that the idea of open-toppers with platform doors seemed to be a strange idea to the 'powers that be' at Eastern National at the time. Or perhaps they did not need any more open-toppers. Anyway, it was a nice bus but a bit sluggish which was probably due to the fact that the platform doors added about half of a ton to the weight. Driving one of these buses on the 322, the forty-seven miles from Braintree to London, especially in the London traffic, must have required a good deal of patience but the driver could be sure that it would get there!

A few examples might help to illustrate the surprises and experiences in store for a summer bus driver: in the 1960s at least. One day, when the Clacton carnival was on, as usual, the procession brought the centre of the town to a standstill. The buses were in the wrong positions at the wrong time. In my case we ended up at Fernwood Avenue at Holland-on-Sea at about the same time as the other bus on the 112 (Sea Front) service. The schedules side of my brain calculated that if we went back to Clacton straightaway we would be there in time to work our following departure to Holland-on-Sea. Thus we left the other bus to work the service from Holland to Jaywick Sands. We turned the destination indicator to 'PRIVATE', something that we rarely did, and hastened back to Clacton Bus Station. We pulled into the bus station and received puzzled and worried looks from the regulator. In those days it was unusual for Eastern National buses to run 'dead' (light) anywhere, especially those engaged on Clacton town services. I explained my thinking to him and he accepted my idea whole-heartedly. We then returned to Holland-on-Sea as a number 112.

The town services in Clacton were much the same as in 1965. Most were on a simple hourly or half-hourly headway. The exception was the 121 (Highfield Park to Jaywick Sands) which had three buses each hour on a roughly twenty minute headway. One bus each hour ran via Clacton Railway Station and took a few minutes longer than the direct service via Old Road. These extra minutes were the reason why the service was not exactly every twenty minutes. After 1900 hours (7pm), all the buses on the 121 ran direct via Old Road. However one evening I forgot and on the first bus after 1900 I went via the Station to the consternation of some of the passengers! I wondered why it was so quiet at the Railway Station!

In the next chapter, I will conclude my driving experiences as a seasonal driver at Clacton Garage with accounts of my forays further afield than the boundaries of the town.

Edited by Richard Delahoy,
with grateful thanks to Chris Stewart.



2378: *A man happy in his job! Terry with 2378, about to depart from "Jaywick Sands, E. N. Office" on the 112 to Holland-on Sea with a healthy top deck load, as taken by Bob Beaumont.*

7652 VW: Decided non-standard in the EN fleet was **102**, *an ex Moores of Kelvedon Commer Avenger/Yeates which was in its last season when Terry worked at Clacton; re-licenced in April 1968 for the season, it was withdrawn that September and disposed of. Alan Osborne had photographed it at Walton on Naze depot in September 1967 during a Group tour.*







Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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