

Essex Bus Magazine Extra

Historical features special issue

Issue 9 Autumn 2025



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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From the Colour Archives



Southend Transport's double deck fleet was of necessity largely low-height, partly because of the railway bridge over Southend High Street but also, post Coordination in 1955, the low bridges on the 7 & 8 at Rochford, Hawkwell and Hockley. This had meant lowbridge buses with the unpopular and inconvenient sunken offside gangway upstairs. That changed in 1959/60 when Southend took half a dozen AEC Bridgemasters in a fleet by now standardised on Leyland Titans, still with conventional open rear platforms. A change of tack saw the next buses ordered as Leyland/Albion's Lowlander, a not wholly successful marrying of Titan units to a lower framed chassis. Southend took 10 in 1963, 323-32 (7087-96 HJ), with front entrance Alexander bodies – a first for Southend Transport. The front end was a compromise, with a high driving position that necessitated a step up to the front seats upstairs and an awkward change in window line at the front, as easily seen here. Other bodybuilders such as Northern Counties made a neater job of it. Initially they carried Albion badges on the radiator filler cap but, as seen here, Leyland across the radiator grille.

Initially used crew operated (double deck OMO was not legal in 1963), they were used temporarily and under a special dispensation one man operated during the 1967 strike. Subsequently they were permanently modified to meet the OMO regulations in 1969/70. This involved a small box protruding over the bonnet as seen here, to house the ticket machine. One problem was that the driver's position was very high in relation to passengers standing on the platform to pay him. Later, when the first 26 Daimler Fleetlines were introduced, the Lowlanders were also fitted with a passenger operated Videmat ticket machine to the right of the entrance, really of use only to lower deck passengers. This included a fold over cream "Exact Fare Only" notice on the radiator cowl, seen here in its lowered position (with blue painted back) as the bus - 326 - was being used crew operated when I photographed it leaving Southend Central Bus Station on 14 April 1976.

Unpopular with many drivers because of a difficult gear change (these were the manual gearbox LR7 model rather than the semi-automatic option), let alone the sub optimal OMO layout, they had a relatively short life in Southend. The first to be withdrawn was 330 in 1973 (with accident damage), the last, 328, in January 1977. Against all odds, one survives, 326, the subject of our photo, in Canada as a café, a story we've told in previous EBMs.

Southend reverted to conventional rear platform highbridge Leyland PD3 Titans for their final 15 front engined deckers (333-47), which could pass under the High Street bridge but were banned from the 7 & 8.

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Introduction

EBM Extra is an occasional series devoted entirely to historical features that we don't have room for in the main monthly magazine. Each issue aims to cover a broad range of eras, operators and places, all related to Essex.

We plan to publish two Extras each year, subject to funding; we already have sponsors for 2026 & 2027 but would welcome further offers, either for a whole issue or as a contribution to one (currently each issue of EBM costs about £660 including postage to members) for 2028. All articles in this magazine were written by **Richard Delahoy**, except where noted. For this issue, rather than having one sponsor, the issue is dedicated to the memories of four local enthusiasts whose transport collections have raised the funds to cover the cost. You can read about all four individuals – Terry Challis, Bryan Everitt, Bill White and Les Thorington – starting on page 2. A subsequent issue will be dedicated to Martin Weyell, for many years our Tours Organiser and Committee Member, and one to the photos of Frank Church.

We hope you will enjoy this Extra magazine and will find the range of articles interesting and stimulating. In this latest issue we look back at an often-overlooked operator, Viceroy Coaches, photos of buses used in other roles, while the "modern era" feature looks at the short lived "mystery" operator, Essex County Buses. Hopefully there is something for everyone. Enjoy!

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Front cover: rarely featured in EBM, Viceroy Coaches of Saffron Walden ran a varied and fascinating fleet, none more so than AGP 843. An AEC Regal, it was new to Blue Belle of London SW2 in May 1933, with this rare Beadle observation coach body seating 35 (RC35C); the entrance was just ahead of the rear wheels. Acquired by Viceroy in July 1943, it lasted in the fleet until 1962 and is seen here in Saffron Walden between trips on the service to Dunmow, in company with an ubiquitous Bedford OB. **Copyright Harry Luff/Online Transport Archive**

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This Issue's Sponsors

As noted on page 1, this issue has been funded by the proceeds of items left to us by four enthusiasts who sadly passed away; there will be other similar issues in due course to commemorate other late members whose collections have added to our funds. Here we present a brief pen picture of those individuals.

Rev. Terry Challis

Born in February 1940 at Pitsea in South Essex, the youngest of seven children, Terry's earliest recollection of an interest in buses, apart from playing with a toy trolleybus as a toddler, was soon after the war had finished when, in London Road Hadleigh, his eldest brother pointed out the difference between an AEC and a Bristol. The local services in the area were mostly provided by Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services at that time. They ran a mixture of AECs and Bristols: being a Tilling firm they were nearly all fitted with Gardner 5LW engines. As well as recollections of the various operators seen in Hadleigh (including Benfleet & District and, occasionally, Campbells of Pitsea) he recalled trips to Southend by bus and seeing the Corporation buses and trolleybuses. A move to senior school in Westcliff in 1951 meant buses had to be used, one of Terry's favourite routes being service 24 from Hadleigh to Leigh Station and then the 21 to the school. A bus on the 21 is illustrated in our "Blind spot" on page 24. For the school-boy bus enthusiast this route to school was a real bonus. Besides getting to school without any long walks, there was a veritable feast of buses to be observed at Leigh Station.

Terry's enthusiasm continued to develop and on leaving school, he started work with Eastern National at the Head Office in Chelmsford at the age of 16.

Below: working in the schedules office for EN, one of the routes Terry became involved with was the 251, the former City Coach Company Southend to Wood Green service - undoubtedly the most complex scheduling exercise across the company. Typifying the allocation of the more powerful Bristol LD Lodekkas with 6-cylinder Bristol engines to this trunk service is 817 HNO, 1501, a 1956 delivery seen here at Tylers Avenue when almost brand new. It became 2470 in the 1964 numbering scheme.

The route ran via Battlesbridge at this stage, until the road under the low bridge at Shotgate was lowered. Tylers Avenue was the former City Coach Company depot in Southend, not far off the High Street and next door to the fire station, a story we told in EBM Extra 3. **Frank Church**



Later Terry moved to British Railways from 1959 to 1964, before leaving to take up theological studies at college. Then he returned to EN in 1965 as a seasonal conductor at Clacton. More studies and marriage followed, but in 1967 he again sought seasonal work, this time with Crosville Motor Services at Rock Ferry, close to the college where he was studying. After graduating in 1967, he obtained a curate's post in the parish of Billericay but could not start until ordained, so went back to EN at Clacton for seasonal work, this time to train as a driver and duly passed his test in June 1968, working there until September. That was the end of Terry's time working in the bus industry, as he took up full time work in the Church, including a spell in Kenya. He then worked in Birmingham, Enfield and Bolton before settling in Blackpool, where I first met him and enjoyed the hospitality of Terry and his wife.

The complete story of Terry's work in the bus industry and his enthusiasm for the industry was told in EBN over 15 instalments between 2008 and 2012 and runs to 37,000 words. We have a text only complete copy available as a pdf document which can be e-mailed to members on request. It's a fascinating read!

Sadly Terry passed away in Cleveleys in October 2022; he was a relatively recent member of EBEG, number 985.

Bill White

Bill, member 340, didn't work in the industry (as far as we know) but had a life-long interest in buses. Back in our June 1996 issue, he wrote about his earliest years as an enthusiast:

"My interest began whilst at Primary School in the last year or two of the [Second World] war. Living close to Southend Road/Bradwell Road which most local routes used, as well as buses from Southend, Chelmsford and beyond could easily be spotted. The 1040 Chelmsford - Tilbury Ferry was seen later when it passed the Senior School (where I attended from 1944)".

Below: typical of the buses that the young enthusiast Bill White would have seen in his hometown of Grays was JTW 235, Eastern National 3880 (later 1180). A wartime Guy Arab new in March 1943 with a utility Brush low-bridge body, it was photographed in Grays Town Centre by **Alan Cross** in June 1951. It passed to London Transport at the end of September 1951 but was returned to EN in February 1952 and lasted until withdrawal in 1955.



"My first job from 1949 found me working not far from the EN Depot in Argent Street in Grays, in those days the outward journeys of the 51/53/40 travelled via the lower part of Bridge Road into Argent Street, where there was a bus stop outside the garage. The route was then via what was then referred to as the Old High Street, a stop near the Parish Church, then along the High Street, over the railway crossing to the Memorial. So in those days I could see buses at times on all routes including the 31 to Tilbury via Little Thurrock which also touched on a part of Bridge Road".

For those unfamiliar with the complex history of bus provision in Grays, at this time EN worked local services to the east of the town centre as well as longer distance routes, with London Transport running services to the west; there were no through buses across the town centre. Hence EN had their own garage in Argent Street, south of the railway line near the end of the High Street. In 1951 the EN local services were transferred to LT (along with 28 buses, but these were later returned) along with the garage. The full story is told in various sources, including our own 1980 booklet by Alan Osborne, please enquire if you'd like details. (Incidentally, the Argent Street premises were advertised for sale by LT early in 1954).

Bill kept in touch with our Peter Snell, who wrote the Eastern National Enthusiasts Guild column for EBN, and supplied information such as fleet lists from the 1940s. He continued to report current news from the Grays area well into the present century, continuing to live in Grays. Sadly he passed away in January 2023 and bequeathed a collection of books, notes and models to us.

Les Thorington

Les's interest in buses was undoubtedly sparked by his father's involvement in local bus operations, as General Manager of A J S Motor Services (Mr A J Springett) based at the Weir Garage, Rayleigh, who ran services between Rayleigh and Southend both via Thundersley and Hadleigh and also via Hockley and Rochford. These were all roads already well served by other private operators (except for the section via Stroud Green) when AJS started operations in March 1930. Southend Watch Committee refused licences for the services to pick up/set down in the borough (not that that entirely stopped Springett!) and then the new 1930 Road Traffic Act came into effect, creating a uniform, national licensing system which favoured established operators. The upshot was that AJS's licence applications were all refused, including on appeal to the Minister of Transport. Thus AJS was forced to close down in November 1931. Had they been established a couple of years earlier, some of the licence applications might have succeeded, but they were seen as having come late to the market and were accused of "creaming off" traffic from the established operators – indeed, their licence applications attracted objections from Westcliff Motor Services, Southend Corporation, The Thundersley, Hadleigh & District Motors, Pearse's Motor Services, The Borough Services, Rayleigh Motor Services and the London & North Eastern Railway. Quite a formidable opposition!

Springett himself was then employed by Rayleigh Motor Services as a Director and they took over the existing garage and some buses. Ernie Thorington, Les's dad, was also taken on by Rayleigh and continued with them, Springett giving Ernie a glowing reference when Rayleigh Motor Services were taken over by Westcliff and it is thought that he continued to work for Westcliff for some years.

Les continued with his bus and rail interests, including railway modelling, and served overseas in Korea, a country with which he developed a long relationship, supporting veterans of that conflict. After retiring from his main job, he continued to develop railway connections by working part time at Leigh Station on LTS Rail (now c2c), a role he only gave up relatively recently. He was also active in the Southend Rail Travellers Association (before working for the railway) and with the Southend Area Bus User Group, not standing down from the latter until 2020 due to health reasons. He was EBEG member 352 (we don't have a record of when he joined, probably in the 1970s) and used to participate in our local meetings and tours. He died in November 2022.

Right: Ernie Thorington, right, in front of AJS VX 4773, a Chevrolet LQ.



Bryan Everitt

Bryan is probably best remembered in enthusiast circles for his self-published, definitive history of Moore Brothers of Kelvedon. Published in 1998, it represented the culmination of many years of research. Moores could trace their history back to 1815, when Edward Moore started up in business as a carrier – horse drawn, of course. Based in Feering, by 1825 he was running twice weekly to Colchester and to Chelmsford, on market days. Joined by his brother Charles, they bought land in Kelvedon and built the Temperance Hotel, with garages and stabling behind. It later became known as the Roselyn Garage. Whilst passengers were probably carried on the carriers carts, their first entry into full-blown passenger operation was in 1881, when they introduced a horse-drawn omnibus service to Coggeshall. The business progressed through various generations of the family and into the motor bus era, with a network of routes largely centred on Kelvedon.

Post war the fleet largely standardised on Guy Arabs, single and double deck, new and second-hand. Then came the shock news of the sale of the business to Eastern National, the last day of Moores' operations being 2 February 1963, a day of heavy snow.

We don't actually know much about Bryan's background; he wasn't an EBEG member but his family passed on to us his collection of Moores photos and research material, the core of which is retained in our archives, along with various other photos and books. He'd certainly kept up an interest in buses, as his collection included pictures he took of the demolition of First's Chelmsford bus station and depot at the end of 2004, and he had been a regular purchaser of photos from the Omnibus Society. We think he died in 2017.

Below: Moores are probably best remembered for their fleet of double deck Guy Arabs, such as ONO 538, seen in Colchester Bus Station on 25 March 1963 in this shot by **Philip Wallis**. It was one of those bought new by Moores, in this case in 1949 with a lowbridge Strachans body. Decent colour pictures of Moores buses before the sale to EN are pretty rare, so here we see it still in Moores livery (not dissimilar to EN's) about 6 weeks after the takeover, now carrying EN fleetnumber plate 1037 and KN allocation plate. It was withdrawn later in 1963.



The Forester X99

Bus deregulation was bound to see the start of some new, innovative services, but few expected one of the protagonists to be the Forest District of London Buses. This is the X99 story.

X99 actually started just ahead of D-Day (October 26), being a licensed service under the old rules but exploiting the new freedoms that the 1980 Act had introduced (reversing the burden of proof and no longer protecting existing services). First day of operation was August 2nd, 1986 – we'll come back to that shortly.

The route linked Harlow with Basildon, via Epping, Loughton, Ilford, Romford, Brentwood, Billericay and Laindon, with an end-to-end journey time of 2 hours 10 minutes, running hourly. Some early/late journeys started or finished in Romford, but otherwise all buses were scheduled to run right through (with, for example, the last two west/northbound trips running dead from Harlow back to Hornchurch depot). X99 used a dedicated fleet of Leyland Nationals that had been refurbished, converted to single door and fitted with dual purpose seats. Painted in an attractive and eye-catching livery of red and white with green stripes, the buses – operated from Hornchurch (RD) garage – were LS 27, 30, 71, 76, 79 & 435. In addition, standard Nationals LS 118 & 121 were used as spares, being tachograph fitted.

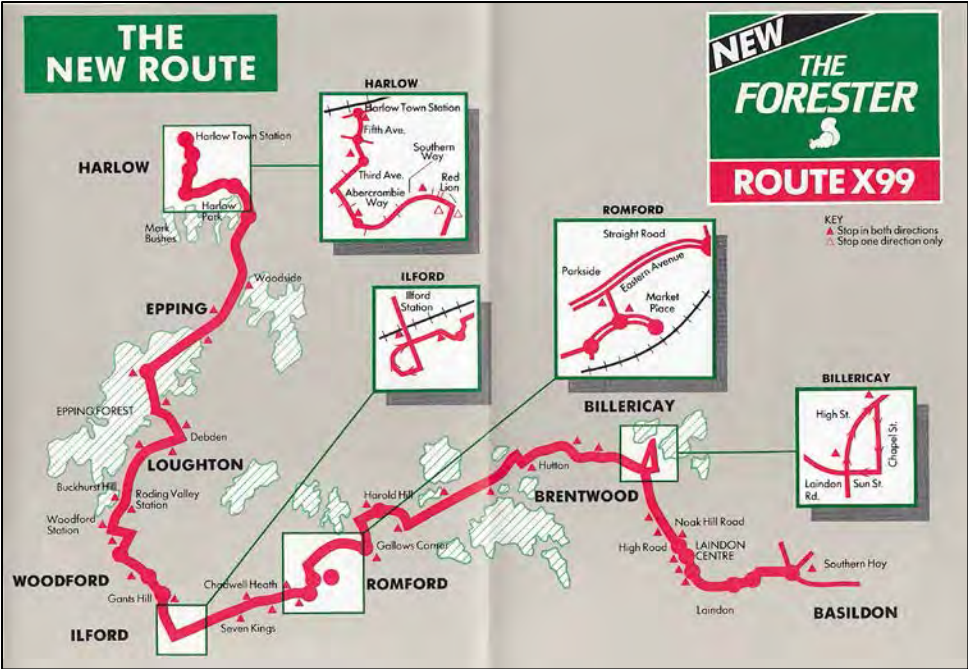


A very attractive full colour multi-panel timetable leaflet was produced, including a route map, list of all stops (it was a limited stop operation) and a fare chart. Also included were details of Forest District excursions to be run on summer Sundays when X99 didn't run, using the X99 buses. Oh, and inside the front cover a notice headed "Take a free ride on the first day". Rather too many people did – or tried to!



Commenting on that fares free first day, LOTS recorded (in TLB 264): "X99 duly began on 2nd August. By midday buses were an hour or so behind schedule, the free travel offer had produced large queues, many people had to wait 2 hours to get on, some drivers would not take standing passengers and others took as many as could be crammed in; some drivers did not seem to know where to go, or what stops to use, arguments broke out at Romford as the publicity leaflet quoted a different stop to that bearing the route number. Absolute chaos, perhaps it's settled down now".

Adding to this, LOTS reported the following month that: "Essex police complained about the excess loads on the first day and warned that it was not to continue. Several stops had been changed, some had not been marked up, and there were errors in the publicity leaflets, leading to the arguments and disappointments. At one place the official route had been changed after most drivers had completed the lengthy route learning. Certainly within a few weeks the service had settled somewhat, but several reports we have received tell of erratic time-keeping, 30 mins late being normal - and gaps in service, mostly arising from curtailments. Was it too ambitious, perhaps?". Interestingly, the destination blind set that LOTS illustrated included no fewer than 8 potential curtailment points! Typical LTI



Whilst it settled down, it was perhaps a bridge too far for London Buses, competing as it did with established Eastern National and London Country routes, and with a rather rambling route – Romford to Basildon direct via the A127 would have been much more attractive, for example. So it was not a surprise when it was announced that it was to cease, the last day being 6 February 1987.

Thus, in the event, it only ran for six months, but it certainly brightened up the local scene whilst it lasted.

With thanks to LOTS and Ian's Bus Stop for info.

FARES

BASILDON TOWN CENTRE Southern Hay

80	BILLERICAY Sun Center									
120	80	BRENTWOOD HIGH STREET								
120	120	80	HAROLD HILL Hilldene Avenue							
160	120	80	40	ROMFORD Market Place						
160	160	120	80	40	ILFORD Station or Haircut Street					
160	160	120	80	80	40	WOODFORD Station				
160	160	160	120	120	80	40	DEBDEN Broadway			
200	160	160	160	120	120	80	80	EPPING CHURCH		
240	200	160	160	160	120	120	120	80	HARLOW Town Station	

CHILD FARES

Up to two children under 5 years accompanying an adult or child ticket holder not occupying seats to the exclusion of other passengers are carried free. Children aged 3 and under 16 years and additional children under 5 years are charged half the adult fare for a single journey on one bus except that adult fares apply before 9.30am on Mondays to Fridays.

THE FOLLOWING TICKETS ARE NOT AVAILABLE ON THIS SERVICE

TRAVEL CARDS / CAPITAL CARDS / BUS PASSES / LONDON EXPLORERS / ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED PERSONS TRAVEL PERMITS provided by the LONDON BOROUGHS

For further information please ring 04024 48851



Above and below: on the fateful fares free first day (2 August 1986) LS 76 (OJD 876R) in Basildon, just arrived and unloaded (bottom) and laying over before the onslaught of passengers (above). Both **Richard Delahoy**



All in a day's work – Boxing Day 1979

My first official driving for Southend Transport – for one day only.



When I started work in 1973 I made a conscious decision *not* to work in passenger transport, wanting to keep my hobby and career separate. But I had always hankered after driving a bus (in service) so in the autumn of 1978 I booked time off from my day job and arranged a PSV driving course with a company based at Kelvedon, Training Developments (Transport) Ltd, using an ex-Colchester Leyland PD2A, OVX 139D. I duly passed my test just before Christmas 1978 but the Traffic Commissioner's office didn't issue my badge and licence until January 2nd, 1979. This was very unfortunate at the time. Southend Transport had started running special services both within the Southend Coordination Area and beyond from 1971 on Boxing Day, after Eastern National decided to close on that day (as both did on Christmas Day itself). The story of those special Boxing Day services is on-line at

www.signal-training.com/ebeg/xmas.htm.

Left: my training bus – till the engine blew up; they then hired similar Colchester 44. The location is somewhere in Witham, outside the instructor's brother's house, where we had just delivered a ladder!

Now the Union agreement at Southend prohibited the use of part time or casual drivers – but the deal for Boxing Day only was that it was not a rostered day's work and was staffed by volunteers from the full-time staff. If there were not enough such volunteers, then casuals could be used – and in 1978, the numbers fell short. Derek Giles, the Traffic Superintendent, would have used me had Cambridge pulled their finger out in time, but it was not to be. In that year, Southend actually ended up arranging for Ensign Bus to cover a number of late duties on the 400 as a result – and I photographed Peter Newman driving one.

Through the winter and then spring of 1979 I didn't get a chance to use my new licence, other than when Lyn Watson and I hired a Southend Transport PD3, 340, to take a group of enthusiasts to Brighton to see the Coach Rally there that April. Then at the end of May I had a chance encounter with Peter Newman and his sons at a fund raiser at their local primary school (which I'd also attended) and gave him a copy of the photo from the previous Christmas. He saw that I had a licence and took my details. By the following Friday evening I was driving a Southend Fleetline for Ensign on rail replacement – Wickford to Southminster in this case – and there followed a lot of casual work, both rail replacement subcontracted from Southend to Ensign and also collecting and delivering sales stock. Plus a very brief spell whilst on holiday in Scotland with a friend, driving for Graham's of Paisley, a real baptism of fire, as briefly recounted in EBM 733, May 2025.

And so to Christmas 1979. In the run up, I'd been out driving rail replacements on December 2, 7, 8, 9, 15 & 17. No peace for the wicked! Then the Saturday before Christmas, I and three others (Lyn Watson, Andy Meadows and Peter Squibb if I recall correctly – all now sadly passed away) flew on the BA Shuttle from Heathrow to Glasgow, car to Western SMT's Johnstone depot and then picked up four Bristol FLFs to bring back to Essex – I had ex Eastern Counties MAH 494E. The drive took so long, despite it being a fast bus, that I ended up parking it in Westcliff near my home on the Saturday night and took it to the Royal Docks, where Ensign rented storage space, the next

morning. The following day, Christmas Eve, was an early finish in my office and in the evening I was to be found covering a Grays to Upminster rail replacement – probably no guard, a common issue at the time, so I didn't finish till 2240. Christmas Day was a day of rest, thankfully.

Then came my first official driving for Southend Transport – for which I was issued with a winter uniform jacket and trousers and staff/payroll number 187 (later that changed to 541). I copped a long shift on town services, 0945 to 0043 (14 hours 58 elapsed), of course the regular staff took the more attractive shifts! The special services included routes normally operated by Eastern National, although of course within the Coordination Area, either operator could work any route. So what did the long duty comprise?

I was instructed to sign on at 0945 but then hung around at the garage, presumably as spare cover, until taking over Fleetline 371 (WJN 371J) outside the garage at 1041 on service 3 to Canvey Leigh Beck and back, handing over to another driver outside the garage at 1245. I then appear to have had a further break (spare again, I think) before going to Central Bus Station to take over a newer Fleetline, 223 (XTE 223V) for a short trip to Temple Sutton on route 17 (1404 out, 1420 back) then changing to service 22 to Hullbridge at 1439. Operating the 22 was clearly a last-minute decision as it had not been included in the printed timetable leaflet, just on a loose duplicated slip showing a two-hourly service.

Right: ENEG member and officer **Peter Snell** was on hand at Benfleet War Memorial to catch my first trip, heading for Canvey Leigh Beck. At that time, the 3 was normally operated by Eastern National buses. 371 subsequently became an open topper.



Right: Fleetline 223 at the Hullbridge, Anchor terminus; this was another route normally operated by EN buses. My mother came for the ride and is the sole passenger here, I hope the bus heaters were working OK! And I'd add that I was not responsible for the creased panel to the left of the number blind. The bus was only 4 months old at this stage.



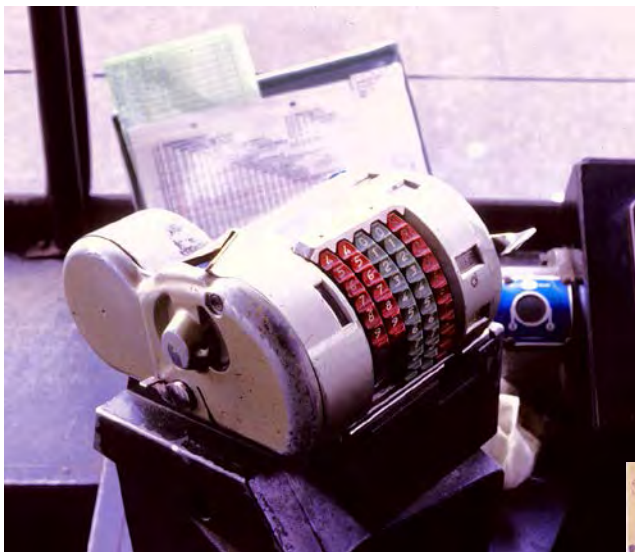
It was a pleasant trip out to Hullbridge via Rayleigh, reversing in the car park of the Anchor Inn, and I was back in Southend at 1617 and time to head back to the garage for a meal break. After sustenance, I took over Fleetline 357 (WJN 357J) outside the garage, a bus I was to use for the rest of the duty, comprising:

1701 to Rayleigh Station, service 1; 1743 back to Central Bus Station; 1827 service 7 Central Bus Station to Victoria Circus, hand over to a fresh driver there and walk to the garage. That driver went to Hockley and back, then started off a service 1 to Rayleigh Station which I took over outside the garage at 2001, in the same bus as before. I then went to Rayleigh and back, followed by the 2127 service 7 to Hockley and back, followed by the last service 1 of the day, 2255 ex Southend, 2342 ex Rayleigh. Take bus back to depot, through the fuel line and park up, sign off at 0043. Sadly I didn't record the number of tickets issued or cash taken on my Almex ticket machine, but I don't recall being overly taxed by hoards of passengers!

So, a long day but with various breaks, the actual driving time was about 9 hours 21. Was it worth it? Well, I certainly enjoyed my first official stint driving Southend Transport buses and it was paid at a premium rate equal to time and a half (less meal break), so I was paid for 21 hours at £1.3725. As I was already working elsewhere, tax and NI were deducted in full, leaving me a net £18.55, which I collected in cash from the garage a week or so later.

The next day (or rather, in view of my post-midnight finish, later the same day – December 27th) saw me taking ex LT DMS 1317 to West Midlands PTE at Quinton garage – a story for another day, as when I turned up at Ensign's then yard in Grays, I was expecting to go to Cardiff, not Birmingham!

I drove many Southend buses and coaches thereafter but always on hire to other operators, principally Ensign, other than Boxing Day 1981 when my services were again called upon. That was until bus deregulation in 1986 when the Union agreement was amended and I was able to become an official part-timer, mostly Friday nights and all day Saturdays, from December 1986 to December 1989. After that I found myself spending my "spare" time driving for Stephenson's.



And to conclude, **left**, here's a standard Southend short-range Almex A ticket machine, for fares 0-99p, taken on a different occasion. The left hand two red bands are for the fare stage number (44 – Central Bus Station), the two green bands are the fare and the right hand red band is the fare class selector (single, return, etc). Behind is my farechart book and, sticking out of the top, a green Almex waybill, to be completed after every trip. They were simple and quick machines to use, but changing ticket rolls could be fiddly.

Right: an example of an Almex ticket. Across the top are shown the boarding stage number (52), fare (80p), class (R – return) and ticket number (316 – issued sequentially). Below is the date of issue and the ticket machine number (0129) and then the operator details, which were on a plate fixed inside the machine. Note that the route number is **not** shown.

These were quite flimsy tickets, 39 mm x 43 mm (1.5" x 1.75"). Reproduction here is fractionally larger than real life.



V is for Viceroy

Viceroy Coaches of Saffron Walden have only received occasional mentions in EBN/M but ran a very fascinating fleet, many of which were left to rot at their depot when withdrawn.

Here we present a brief history (much more work would be needed to produce a comprehensive story), backed with a selection of photos of this eclectic fleet. The origins of the business go back to 1 October 1930 when the Moore family of Felstead put into service a brand-new Morris Viceroy bus, VX 7710, with a 20 seat Watson body, followed by a second one, VX 8828, on 15 December the same year. They ran a Braintree to Bishop's Stortford service in competition with the more established Hicks Bros business; Ralph Moore had previously worked for Hicks – we know this as he was prosecuted for overloading his Hicks bus! (See EBN 660, April 2019 for more details).

The fleetname, which stuck right to the end of operations, was inspired by the model name of these buses, the business trading initially as F C Moore & Sons and as "Viceroy" Super Coach Co, Felstead Phone 49. The timing of the start of the new venture was unfortunate as the licensing provisions of the 1930 Road Traffic Act were about to come into force. F C Moore applied for seven licences but was only granted two, the principal one being Saffron Walden – Thaxted – Dunmow. Meanwhile there was another small operator in Saffron Walden, A V Britton, who took over the garage in Saffron Walden from previous owners by 1926 and, in the 1930s, bought a number of new coaches. In June 1936 a limited company, F C Moore Ltd t/a Viceroy Coaches, was formed to take over both the Moore and Britton businesses, including Britton's garage at Freshwell Street off Bridge Street, Saffron Walden.

An early timetable leaflet appears **opposite**; another was reproduced in EBN 660. Operations were moved to Saffron Walden and in 1938 they bought 12 Bridge Street, later adding numbers 6 & 8 in 1943 (we don't think there was a no.10), which is the base many are/were familiar with. The business of A G Reed, who held excursion licences, was acquired in 1938 and one vehicle acquired, VE 1074, a Graham Dodge 30-seater.

By the time of the formation of the limited company, the fleet had expanded to seven buses, three Morris Viceroy's, a pair of Chevrolet Us, a Bedford WLB and a Bedford WTL, plus a 7-seater Star car, of which all bar the Morris Viceroy's were ex A V Britton. The fleet and operations gradually expanded, mainly by second-hand purchases, but some new, eg a TSM and an Albion coach in 1937, an AEC Regal in 1939, then quite an eclectic mix of new vehicles from 1949 to 1952, comprising Seddon Mk IV, TSM, two Bedford OBs, a Commer Avenger, two AEC Regal IIIs and an AEC Regal IV – the latter the first underfloor-engined coach, with Trans United bodywork.

Meanwhile, double deckers had arrived in the form of an ex-London Transport Leyland TD1 in 1938 and a further Titan in 1942, ex Southdown. More deckers were to come in the 1950s, a mix of Titans and AEC Regents. Particularly notable acquisitions were two of the three AEC Regent IIIs with Weymann bodies new in 1949 to Pest Control (Fisons) of Cambridge for staff transport, HER 27/8. Newer deckers included an ex-Leicester AEC Bridgmaster and a Nottingham AEC Renown and Daimler Fleetline. (We don't have access to a full fleet history,



hence these notes are somewhat sketchy and based on the few published sources).

Left: the second double decker, ex Southdown Leyland TD1 / Shorts UF 7428, in the summer of 1955. It was withdrawn in November 1958 and sold the following year for preservation. Today it resides at the Amberley Chalk Pits Museum, superbly restored to Southdown livery. **Frank Church**

Below: timetable for March 1932, this is the second for licensed operations under the 1930 Road Traffic Act, the first dated 26 October 1931 had one less journey authorised.

“Viceroy” Super Coaches.

REVISED TIME TABLE

BETWEEN

Dunmow, Eastons, Thaxted, Wimbish, Saffron Walden,

SHOWING MAIN CONNECTIONS AT TERMINAL POINTS.

COMMENCING MARCH 21st, 1932.

			Mon. Tues. Wed.				Saturdays.				Sundays.			
			Thurs. Fridays.				a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
<i>Bus from Bps. Stortford</i>	...	arr.	9.5	10.50	1.0	4.45	9.5	10.50	12.45	4.35	7.45	9.45	1.40	5.40
<i> Braintree</i>	...	...	8.55	10.50	1.0	4.45	8.55	10.50	12.45	4.35	7.45	9.45	1.40	5.40
<i> Colchester</i>	...	...	...	10.50	1.0	4.45	...	10.50	12.45	4.35	7.45	9.45	...	5.40
<i> Chelmsford</i>	...	...	8.55	...	1.15	*4.45	8.55	...	1.15	4.45	7.0	9.45	5.45	7.45
<i> London</i>	...	...	...	11.0	...	...	...	11.0	...	...	9.0	...	...	8.50
DUNMOW, Town Hall	dept.	9.5	11.0	1.15	5.0	...	9.5	11.0	1.15	5.0	7.45	9.55	1.45	5.45
Great Easton, Sign Post	...	9.15	11.10	1.25	5.10	...	9.15	11.10	1.25	5.10	7.55	10.5	1.55	5.55
Blamsters Hall	...	9.20	11.15	1.30	5.15	...	9.20	11.15	1.30	5.15	8.0	10.10	2.0	6.0
Thaxted, Swan	...	9.30	11.25	1.40	5.25	...	9.30	11.25	1.40	5.25	8.10	10.20	2.10	6.10
Wimbish, White Hart	...	9.40	11.35	1.50	5.35	...	9.40	11.35	1.50	5.35	8.20	10.30	2.20	6.20
SAFFRON WALDEN, War Mem. arr.	9.50	11.45	2.5	5.50	...	9.50	11.45	2.5	5.50	8.35	10.40	...	2.35	6.35
<i>Bus to Cambridge</i>	dept.	10.0	N.T.P.	...	N.T.P.	6.0	10.0	...	6.0	9.15	...	...	3.0	9.15
<i> Bps. Stortford</i>	...	10.15	...	...	...	6.0	10.15	...	6.0	9.15	...	...	3.0	7.0
<i>Train to Liverpool Street</i>	...	9.53	12.16	2.32	6.0	...	9.53	12.16	2.42	6.0	9.18	...	...	...
<i>Train from Liverpool St.</i>	...	arr.	9.48	11.42	3.49	6.16	9.48	11.42	3.49	6.16	8.25	...	...	...
<i>Bus from Bps. Stortford</i>	...	...	9.57	...	3.27	5.57	9.57	...	3.27	5.57	...	...	2.57	9.12
<i> Cambridge</i>	...	...	9.45	N.T.	N.T.P.	5.45	9.45	...	...	5.45	9.0	...	2.45	9.0
SAFFRON WALDEN, War. Mem. dept.	10.0	12.0	3.55	6.25	...	10.0	11.45	3.55	6.25	9.0	10.45	...	3.0	6.50
Wimbish, White Hart	...	10.10	12.15	4.10	6.35	...	10.10	11.55	4.10	6.40	9.10	10.55	3.15	7.5
Thaxted, Swan	...	10.20	12.25	4.20	6.45	...	10.20	12.5	4.20	6.50	9.20	11.5	3.25	7.15
Blamsters Hall	...	10.30	12.35	4.30	6.55	...	10.30	12.15	4.30	7.0	9.30	11.15	3.35	7.25
Great Easton, Sign Post	...	10.35	12.40	4.35	7.0	...	10.35	12.20	4.35	7.5	9.35	11.20	3.40	7.30
DUNMOW, Town Hall	arr.	10.45	12.50	4.45	7.10	...	10.45	12.30	4.45	7.15	9.45	11.30	3.50	7.40
<i>Bus to London</i>	Dept.	...	...	...	...	...	...	12.35	5.5	...	...	...	...	...
<i> Chelmsford</i>	...	...	*11.45	1.50	5.30	7.15	11.30	1.15	5.0	7.30	9.45	...	4.0	8.0
<i> Colchester</i>	...	...	...	1.0	4.50	...	...	1.30	4.50	...	...	...	4.0	...
<i> Braintree</i>	...	...	11.0	1.0	4.50	...	11.0	1.30	4.50	...	10.0	...	4.0	7.45
<i> Bps. Stortford</i>	...	...	10.50	1.0	4.45	7.15	10.50	12.45	...	7.45	...	...	4.0	...

* Fridays only. M.T. Mondays and Thursdays only. N.T. Not Thursdays. N.T.F. Not Thursdays or Fridays.

Every endeavour will be made to maintain these Services as heretofore, but no guarantee will be given, and the Proprietors reserve the right to alter or suspend the Services. No liability can be accepted for loss or inconvenience through delay or any other causes.

Please forward any Enquiries “VICEROY” SUPER COACH Co., FELSTEAD. Phone 49.
or Suggestions to:—

In terms of services, the Omnibus Society recorded the following extant licences in 1955 – only the stage carriage services are listed, there were also various Express and Excursion & Tours licences:

F. C. MOORE LTD., t/a Viceroy Coaches, of Saffron Walden.

F/R 402/1	Dunmow (Post Office)—Saffron Walden (Memorial). Daily.
F/R 402/2	Saffron Walden (Baptist Chapel)—Dunmow (Post Office). Wkdys.
F/R 402/3	Saffron Walden (High Street)—Audley End (Railway Station). Su.
F/R 402/7	Thaxted (Church)—Saffron Walden (Common). F., Sat.
F/R 402/8	Saffron Walden (Memorial)—Debden Village (Chapel). Daily.
F/R 402/10	Debden Aerodrome (South Gate)—Audley End (Railway Station). M., Su.
F/R 402/12	Saffron Walden (Common)—Radwinter. Tu.
F/R 402/24	Saffron Walden (Memorial) — Wimbish Green (Rayments Farm). Sat.

In December 1969 Viceroy suddenly gave up operation of the Dunmow service, which was picked up by Eastern National a few days later and subsequently linked to the existing 33 from Chelmsford to give a through Saffron Walden to Chelmsford service.

The more recent history gets rather messy, and we don't have room here to include the full details, which would form a substantial article in itself (any volunteers to write it?), with the Operator's Licence being revoked in June 1995, Stort Valley Coaches taking over most operations. A new company, Viceroy of Essex Ltd, owned by the Moore family's company, was then formed and started trading in 1996 and gained a new O Licence, PF0001624. That licence was revoked in 2015 and replaced by PF1134484, which was itself revoked in December 2018. The company subsequently went into liquidation, owing £1m to its parent company, F C Moore Ltd – a sad end to a business tracing its roots back to 1930.

One of the great attractions of Viceroy, beyond the (sometimes) ancient fleet, was that when vehicles were withdrawn, they were simply put to one side so that some really old buses and coaches could be seen in varying stages of decay. In his book referred to below, Jim Young described the situation thus:

"Moore's garage was in Bridge Street but they owned farm premises on Freshwell Street, literally just over the road. As a bus was retired from service it was parked in the far end of the garage then, when more space was needed or it was admitted that the bus would not run again, it was removed to the farm, initially in a series of sheds, and later in the open air. By the 1960s there was a representative selection of the fleet remaining. Unfortunately only a very few were sold for preservation." For example, the original Morris Viceroy VX 7710 of 1930 was still there in 1963, over ten years after withdrawal.

Meanwhile, enjoy this selection of photos of this varied fleet in the "black & white" days. A colour shot appears on the front cover.



Right: fleetname on FHK 199, Albion PK115. **Frank Church**



Some Viceroy deckers:

Top:

JX 7991, Leyland TD5, ECW new in 1940 to Hebble. Acquired in 1953, it ran until 1959. Seen in Station Street, Saffron Walden. The present day stop here is a little further down the road.

Confusingly, Saffron Walden has both a *Station Road* and *Station Street*, which meet at a T junction outside the Railway Arms!

C Carter



Middle:

FTB 11, Leyland TD7, Northern Coachbuilders new in 1941 to Leigh Corporation (Lancs). Acquired in 1956 from Baxters of Hanley, withdrawn 1964.

EBEG collection



Bottom:

HER 27, one of the trio of AEC Regents with Weymann bodies built in 1949 for staff transport at Fisons Pest Control. Two passed to Viceroy, HER 28 in 1958 and sister HER 27 not until 1964. The location is Audley End Station. The reflective front registration plate looks rather incongruous.

EBEG collection

New coaches:

Top:

OTW 427 gets a thorough clean, probably from its driver, in the Bridge Street garage. A Seddon Mk IV with Watson body, it was bought new in 1949 and remained on the fleet until 1965, by which time it must have seemed somewhat dated.

EBEG collection



Middle:

Also bought new, this time in 1950, PVX 105 was one of a pair of AEC Regal IIIs also with Watson bodywork. It lasted until 1966, whilst sister PVX 104 was withdrawn the following year. The location is Dunmow station approach.

A D Packer



Bottom:

A slightly earlier new purchase in 1949 was OVW 282, a relatively rare TSM (Tilling Stevens) with Dutfield body. Here it stands in Dunmow at the top of Station Road. The road direction sign behind the coach is still there in 2025, albeit only with two fingers now!

EBEG collection





Top:

In 1952 Viceroy made the switch to underfloor-engined coaches in the form of UNO 408, an AEC Regal IV with centre-entrance bodywork by Trans United. It was withdrawn in 1967.

EBEG collection



Middle:

The fleet has included a fair selection of lighter weight coaches, ranging from Bedford WTBs through OBs to the "big Bedford", the SBG model. UNE 198 has the inevitable Duple body new in 1967 to Smith of Wigan. The PSVC record it as passing to Viceroy from the Military Police Depot at Purbright, in 1962. It was withdrawn in the 1970s. Like 900 DBD below, it is parked at EN's Wash Lane coach station in Clacton.

EBEG collection



Bottom:

A later Bedford was 900 DBD, an SB5 model again with Duple bodywork seating 41. It was still on fleet in summer 1980, by then the oldest coach in the fleet; we don't have a withdrawal date.

EBEG collection

Top:

Ideas, please! Typifying the dump on the farm opposite the depot, this is possibly the remains of a double decker, maybe an AEC Regent with pre-selector gearbox, but that is rather a stab in the dark.

EBEG collection**Middle:**

Coming much more up to date to conclude this photo selection, here is H29 CFR, a DAF SB230 with Duple body new in 1991 to Jackson of Blackpool. **Phil Ford** photographed it in the depot on 2 June 2000. It later passed through the hands of various other coach operators.

**Bottom:**

Finally, a picture of a modern service bus but something of a rarity – V384 NOA is a Mercedes 0405 with Mercedes bodywork which Viceroy bought new in 2000 (despite the Birmingham registration). I photographed it in Saffron Walden High Street on 16 April 2008.

Richard Delahoy

Ticketing – with thanks to David Harman for these notes

For much of the life of the business, the relatively uncommon Willebrew system was used. That system was developed by Ribble in conjunction with Alfred Williamson Ltd. of Ashton-under-Lyne, the ticket printers. It was first used about 1928. Tickets, originally in rolls, later in packs, were printed with a range of values with the lowest value at the top, highest at the bottom. Usually, two ranges were printed on the front, one up each side, sometimes two more on the back, as in the example below.

To issue a ticket, the conductor placed it in the "Willebrew" cutter such that the value required lined up to the end-edge of the machine, then depressed the lever which cut off a rectangular section and dropped this within the body of the cutter. The passenger received the characteristic "dog-leg" ticket, cut off at the fare he/she had paid.

The cutters were sealed, and in the office the seal could be broken and the retained sections of tickets extracted and analysed to determine the conductor's takings. As the lowest value remaining on the retained sections was (usually) a 1d or ½d above the value of the ticket actually issued, this was a confusing and tedious process for office staff to calculate the fares taken.

The Viceroy single shown **below (front upper, rear lower)** is for a 4½d fare. The retained section would show values ... 5d, 5½d, 6d, 6½d etc. Note that the stage, direction, adult or child and day of the month all had to be clipped out with hand-clippers (although not in practice in this case!). Actual ticket is 5" wide.



The Viceroy ticket marked "W" **below (front only)** is a weekly for 4/-. Here the date, stage boarded and each of the week's journeys have been clipped out. Note 6-day week including Saturday - very common up until the 1960s.



Viceroy also had return (pink), exchange (green) and unusually, gummed parcel tickets (khaki).

Viceroy also used some unusual TIM machines from the early 1950s, capable of issuing weekly tickets up to a value of 8/11d and with the days of the week printed to enable them to be clipped as used. They later fell out of use, as indeed did the Willebrew cutters, ticket values simply being marked by felt tip pen. Post decimalisation and prior to the electronic era, second-hand Setright machines were in use.

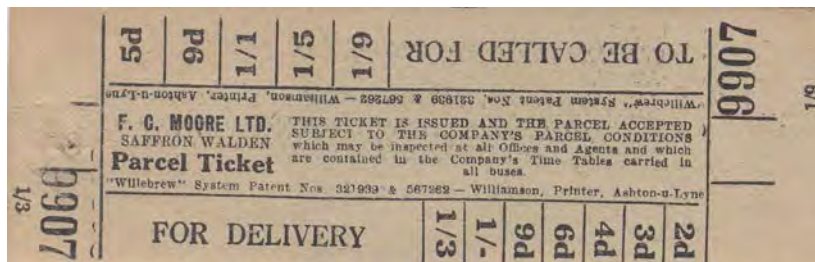
Below: example of a TIM weekly, note the random pattern of the daily hole punches, none actually on the day of week letters at the top/bottom!



Right: a genuine Viceroy Willebrew machine from David Harman's collection, showing the cutter at the top.



The Willebrew system was a cumbersome one but surprisingly popular and long-lived. In East Anglia, Eastern National, Eastern Counties and Hicks Bros. all used it for many years.



Left: parcels ticket.

I'm extremely grateful to Nigel Turner for reviewing a draft of this article and making useful suggestions/additions, and to David Harman for his input on ticketing.

Sources and further reading:

Essex & Suffolk Independent Bus Operators, An Early 1960s Selection, J R Young, Farley Publications – a selection of 27 photos, mostly withdrawn vehicles.

The Small Stage Carriage Operators of Essex & Suffolk, PSV Circle, PF6 (Jan 1967) and PF6A (Jan 1971).

Current Fleets of Small Operators in the Eastern Traffic Area, PSV Circle, FFA4, May 1980 and subsequent PSV Circle *Current Fleets (Essex)*, G125 (1999), G225 & 2G225 (2002) & G625 (2014)

Vehicles of Essex, custom report by Busdata Computing Services, July 1995.

Eastern (or East Anglia) Bus Handbook, 1993 & 1998 editions (possibly others).

Omnibus Society various publications listing *Independent Bus & Coach Services, Eastern Traffic Area*, April 1955, January 1971, February 1973, February 1976, October 1980, under a variety of titles.

Fleet List, Omnibus Society Essex Group, March 1962.

The Years Between 1909 & 1969, Volume 2, Oxford Publishing, 1984.

Omnibus Society *Eastern Bulletin* issue 74, Summer 1995.

Points from the Past, article by David Harman in the Transport Ticket Society journal, March 2020.

Essex Bus News issue 660, April 2019, EBEG - Nigel Turner recalls the very early days of the business.

Curiously, despite running double deckers, Viceroy didn't feature in Geoff Mills' book *East Anglia's Lost Double Deckers*. Perhaps he didn't define Saffron Walden as being in East Anglia.

Shiny New Lodekkas!

Our time machine takes us back to the 1960s to admire two shots of gleaming Eastern National Bristol FLF Lodekkas, complete with two cream bands (of differing styles) and no adverts.



Top: EOO 588, 1620 (later 2746) new Sept. 1962 on the 2, Grays to Southend. **Ian Sharpe collection**

Bottom: applying the finishing touches at ECW to GNO 791B, new to EN Nov 1964 as 2815. **Michael Dryhurst**



Buses in unusual guises

Most buses have a full service life and then go for scrap, perhaps via number of small operators first, but a few find non-psv use and in a smaller number of cases, vehicles are purpose built on psv chassis from new. Here we explore a few with Essex connections.

First off, here are some pictures courtesy of the ACV Gazette featuring a purpose-built demonstration unit for the Colchester Lathe Company of Hythe, Colchester. WXR 221 was an AEC Reliance 2HMU3RA, supplied by Keith and Boyle, London dealers. A specially designed body was constructed to enable the coach to display a working selection of the company's lathes. It had very deep windows as seen here. The export version of the Reliance chassis was chosen as the vehicle was used for overseas demonstration tours. Indeed, built in summer 1959, it then went on a two-year tour which took in Scandinavia, as well as the UK and Ireland. The rear featured a drop-down tailboard, to allow the lathes to be loaded/unloaded and for access by potential customers.

The article from the September/October issue of the ACV Gazette went on to describe some of the features, viz: "Adjacent to the driver is a small office with table. Adjustable, reclining crew seats can be swivelled from their normal forward-facing position to face the writing table. Space for sales brochures and a cocktail cabinet also grace this section where prospective customers may be entertained.

Other amenities for the crew include a wash-basin, water heater, 10-gallon water tank and Calor gas cooking ring".

Not surprisingly, this was a heavy vehicle, estimated fully laden to be 12½ to 13 tons, on a 30' chassis. Indeed, whilst in Finland, the road surface gave way under the back of the coach, necessitating a new half shaft and

differential bearing.

We don't know its fate, presumably scrapped. Did anyone see it in Colchester or elsewhere when in the UK? We'd love to hear from you if you did!



Above: posed when new outside Colchester Castle.

Right: the rear and nearside. Lettered as Demonstration Unit No. 4, I wonder if any of the previous ones had also used psv chassis? Both **ACV Gazette**





Meanwhile, one use for life-expired psvs in the 1950s and 1960s was as mobile shops. This was very true in the newly developing Basildon New Town, where house building often ran ahead of the provision of shops – and remember that in those days with few fridges, most housewives shopped almost daily. The top shots from **John Rugg** are both set in Basildon.

Upper: AEL 2 was an AEC Q with Harrington body, new to Elliott Bros (Royal Blue) in 1934, seen in January 1960. The side-engined coach was a brave choice for a shopkeeper!



Middle: mechanically much simpler but smaller was this 1935 Dennis Ace JG 5450 with Park Royal body, ex East Kent. John found it serving one of the new housing estates in February 1959.



Bottom: from our **Bob Campen** collection, here is a former Eastern National Bristol L6B with ECW body, PTW 104, seen in Grays on 15 August 1964 as Taylor's Mobile Shops (were any of the others ex psvs?). New to EN in 1950 as 4101, it was renumbered 325 in 1954 and withdrawn in 1963 before sale in March 1964 as seen here.

Blind spot

Bob Williamson, with notes by Richard Delahoy

Here's a short blind from Benfleet & District/Canvey & District, reflecting their limited sphere of operations.

This example was used in one of their ex-Birmingham CT Daimler CWs with utility bodies but the combined fleets also had a number of CWs supplied new during World War II and shortly thereafter, amounting to 24 in total. Destination boxes comprised a mix of shallow single line boxes (as featured here) and much deeper, almost square boxes. Both are illustrated below. The blind listed here was produced by the Whitlay Tool Company.

Upper photo: displaying the single line display as per the listing is Canvey & District ex-Birmingham CT FOP 364 at the Leigh Beck terminus at the eastern tip of Canvey Island (terminus today for First 22 & 27). The picture was taken shortly after the combined fleets were acquired by Westcliff Motor Services, as per the sticker in the front bulkhead window and the bus remains in the sage green and cream livery. It was one of only two of the Daimlers to be new with 5-cylinder Gardner engines but was later re-engined with an AEC 7.7. FOP 340 became 1195 in the 1954 renumbering scheme and passed on from Westcliff to Eastern National and was sold to Southend Corporation as their 247 in June 1955. It then had a body swap (see EBM Extra 8 for details and photo) and ran as an open-topper until October 1970. **ENEG collection**

Lower photo: showing the larger destination box is FOP 364, also ex Birmingham but now in Westcliff livery and with a new destination blind reflecting its wider use across the Westcliff fleet – in this case at the Hobblythick Lane terminus of service 21 to Leigh Station (my local route). Taken on 20 September 1952. Later numbered 1197 and withdrawn in 1955. **Photographer Derek S Giles, copyright The Bus Archive, ref DG02_02234**



The lost names of deregulation - 1: ???

This is the first of what we hope might become a regular feature, looking at operators that sprang up (or started bus services) after deregulation in 1986 but then faded away – some failed or went bust, others were taken over or simply retired gracefully.

There are plenty of names to choose from – a very quick think about obvious ones throws up Stansted Transit, Regal Busways, Coastal Red, Town & Country, Kingstons, Clintonia, District Bus, but also the more obscure such as JWS Travel, Go Ride CIC, Webbs, Imperial, Four Counties, Crown Coaches, Amber – we could go on, but you get the idea.

To start us off, we are looking at a short-lived operator that had no logo/fleetname, just a question mark on its anonymous cream and red buses. This was Essex County Buses. We first noted their activities in our September 2009 edition, saying:

"Essex County Buses Ltd., of Henham, Bishops Stortford, Herts., began operating two town services, 81/2 in Bury St Edmunds on 2nd September. These compete with existing First Eastern Counties services. A number of former Stansted Transit buses are in use in a red/cream livery layout, reminiscent of the Eastern National "badger" era scheme. They bear large "?" fleetnames. This refers to a passenger competition to choose a new logo for the operation. The operating centre is Woodlands Farm, The Street, Sheering, Bishops Stortford". They held an O licence for 30 vehicles.

Of more interest to our area, in the same issue we noted that they'd registered a new service City 42, Galleywood to Broomfield Hospital, over the existing First 42 from 3 October, 2009.

Below: a few weeks after starting, AE08 DLF, an unusual MCV bodied ADL Dart, was by far the newest bus in the fleet. Note the "?". All the pictures were taken on 24 October 2009 at The Angel, Broomfield by **Richard Delahoy**.





Left: the rear had three question marks. Despite a logo later being designed, it was never applied to buses.

By the following month we had more info, viz:

The City 42 service, Broomfield Hospital - Galleywood, duly began on Saturday 3rd October, competing with First's 42. Buses initially displayed just '42', but now show 'C42'. A 15-minute frequency is scheduled during the day, requiring a PVR of six, although only five buses were noted by your sub-editor on the first day. Service Changes this month records First increasing the frequency of their 42 to 12 minutes from 19th October.

The City 42 allocation appears to be shared with the Bury routes and the notional PVR is drawn from:

T402 LGP	Dennis Dart SLF SCC	B31D new 3/99	ex-Stansted Transit
T74 WWV	Dennis Dart SLF Plaxton B33D new 3/99		ex-Stansted Transit
T75 WWV	Dennis Dart SLF Plaxton B33D new 3/99		ex-Stansted Transit
T414 LGP	Dennis Dart SLF SCC	B30D new 5/99	ex-Stansted Transit
T415 OUB	Optare Solo Optare	B25F new 8/99	ex-Home Counties Travel Ltd., Henham
V930 VUB	Optare Excel Optare	B38F new 10/99	ex-Home Counties Travel Ltd., Henham
V937 VUB	Optare Excel Optare	B30F new 10/99	ex-Home Counties Travel Ltd., Henham
V938 VUB	Optare Excel Optare	B30F new 10/99	ex-Home Counties Travel Ltd., Henham
V939 VUB	Optare Excel Optare	B30F new 10/99	ex-Home Counties Travel Ltd., Henham
V119 LVH	Optare Excel Optare	B24D new 12/99	ex-Home Counties Travel Ltd., Henham
AE08 DLF	ADL E200 Dart MCV	B37F new 3/08	ex-Stansted Transit Ltd

The company's website (<http://essexcountybuses.com>), claimed Essex County Buses to be "taking transport to a new level", and went on to say that "... more services in Bury St Edmunds and Chelmsford are pending registrations". New route B3, Westley Estate - Town Centre in Bury has now been registered to commence on 27th November.

Expansion in Essex then followed with another route competing directly with First, service 70 between Colchester and Braintree commenced on 5th January 2010, running every 30 minutes, Monday to Saturday, although reports on the first day suggested that only three vehicles were in use rather than the 5 required. Meanwhile, the competition to design a logo ended on 30th November.

Further acquired vehicles were:

P191 SGV	Optare Excel L1150 Optare	B38F	ex Ipswich Buses 191
K710 KGU	Dennis Dart Plaxton Pointer	B35F	ex-Stansted Transit
L145 YVK	Dennis Dart Northern Counties	B35F	ex Arriva Southend 3145
G957 KJX	DAF SB220 Optare Delta	B47F	ex-Stansted Transit
W429 CWX	Optare Excel L1150 / Optare	B18D	ex Meteor Parking, Stansted.

By our March 2010 issue we were able to record that a logo had now been designed although it was yet to appear on the buses. The designer, Jack Larner, said: "Based on the insight that ECB connects the community, the logo is based on how bus routes appear on a map. The circles represent bus stops while the dynamic lines represent the route-path itself".



But more ominously, the Traffic Commissioner had called the company to a Public Inquiry in Cambridge, scheduled for 8 March.



Left:
Also passing the Angel was V397 VUB, one of five Optare Excels then operated (two more came later). The lettering over the door appears to read "moving the people of Essex", but there were none on board!

And then it was all over!

As we noted in our April 2010 issue:

Operation of the City 42 in Chelmsford, 70 (Braintree - Colchester) and Bury St Edmunds local services, ceased suddenly in the late afternoon of Monday 8th March. This was the day the company had been called to a Public Inquiry by the Traffic Commissioners, although in the event, it was adjourned but later the licence was revoked. The hearing in respect of what is understood to be a related concern, Home Counties Travel Ltd., did go ahead on that day, and their operator licence was revoked.

MCW Metrorider L105 GBO had been on loan from Archer Munro, Birchanger, prior to closure. It was in all over white and appeared only to be used on the 70. Observations indicate that not all advertised journeys were being operated for some weeks during February, due to a shortage of drivers and vehicles. It appears from reports elsewhere, that the PVR was one vehicle in excess of the number of vehicles owned, which may explain use of the Metrorider.

An operating centre had been established in Little Waltham for the Essex services, at the premises used formerly by WHM (t/a Brentwood Coaches). This was used for some weeks, until services ceased, although it does not seem that VOSA were formally advised of this. The company went into liquidation and was finally struck off in 2012.

And so ended a brief episode in the deregulated bus market, one which must have cost First lost revenue. It was rumoured that Essex County Buses was simply a reincarnation of the recently failed Stansted Transit, but we have no evidence of this.

I am grateful to the notes Ian Ransom recorded at the time for *Essex Bus News*.

Could you write a similar story focusing on a "lost name of deregulation"? Please contact the EBMX Editor.

A KSW in Holland

A considerable number of British double deckers have been exported to Holland, many of them Bristol/ECW products, but here is one that just went there on holiday.

Bus rallies have been a feature of our hobby since the 1960s and have evolved over time, but possibly the most ambitious was the Tulip Rally, organised by the indefatigable Mike Kay, then of Grey-Green Coaches, at the end of March 1980. Not only was it to be a multi-day affair, but it was to take place in another country, where full height double deckers are not normally allowed due to the standard bridge heights being lower than in the UK. Entrants travelled there and back by ferry from Sheerness to Vlissingen. Around 400 enthusiasts travelled on the 31 preserved buses, which went out on the overnight sailing on Thursday night and then travelled – very carefully, in the case of the deckers! – to our hotel in Amsterdam. Friday was a free day but with optional excursions on the canals, to a clog maker and a cheese farm, then the rally proper took place on the Saturday at the seaside town of Volendam on the edge of the Ysselmeer. Sadly the weather deteriorated badly, with sleeting rain during the afternoon. Judged by personnel from the Dutch road transport industry, there was some controversy when the Best Double Deck post 1/1/52 and Best ex London Transport double decker awards went to Ensign Bus's DMS1414, immaculately turned out and at the time a demonstrator for DMS sales. Overall winner was GS26.

The buses returned to the ferry terminal on Sunday for the overnight sailing back to Kent. There was only one mishap – affecting DMS1414, on which I was travelling. Returning to Amsterdam on the Saturday evening, it appeared at first that the DMS would fit under a particular modern overbridge. Sadly it didn't – quite! There was a small amount of damage to the front dome, but this was minimised by our slow speed. As an aside, once we were back in the UK, I was despatched to collect a scrap DMS from West Ham garage as a donor for a replacement dome; interestingly, the domes were not interchangeable between the MCW and PRV bodies.

The story of the rally was told in Buses Magazine, June 1980 and the Omnibus Magazine July/August 1980.

Below: Essex interest was in this former Eastern National Bristol KSW open topper, WNO 481, by then owned by Tricentral as a promotional vehicle. Here it leads the procession through Volendam with the Burgomaster of Edam-Volenham top right, welcoming the spectators (I was going to say crowds, but that would have been something of an exaggeration). Used for the Wings band tour, it ended up dumped in Tenerife but was repatriated to the UK and very expensively restored, as extensively covered in EBM and is now in Germany (see EBM 736). **Richard Delahoy**



Southend demonstrators

Bus operators sometimes trial examples of new types, a sort of “try before you buy”, although in some cases it is more a case of a manufacturer or dealer offering something with which to play.

Looking at the list below, it's hard to see that Southend Transport would have had a serious interest in buying say a Ford single decker (although of course some municipalities did dabble with lightweight saloons, none more so than Maidstone Boroline). Here we present a list of those that were allocated temporary fleet numbers in an Exx series, plus later examples prior to the British Bus takeover in 1993, supported by a few choice photos. Not all were used in service. There had been others pre the 1950s but that's a story for another day.

#	Registration	Chassis	Type	Body	Year	Notes
(E1)	9 JML	AEC	Bridgemaister	Crossley	1957	Led to order for 317-22
(E2)	TGB 752	Albion	Aberdonian	Alexander	1957	Led to order for 200-2/5
E3	116 TMD	AEC	Bridgemaister	Park Royal	1959	Cover for late deliveries
E4	661 KTJ	Leyland	Atlantean	Weymann	1959	
E5	7552 MX	AEC	Renown	Park Royal	1963	
E6	4559 VC	Daimler	Fleetline	NCME	1963	(No order at this stage)
E7	SVW 275D	Ford	R192	Duple Midland	1966	
	STB 957C	Leyland	Panther	Willowbrook	1966	
E8	KTD 551C	Leyland	Atlantean	Park Royal	1967	
E9	NEA 101F	Daimler	Fleetline	MCW	1968	Led to order for 348-73
E10	MTF 665G	Leyland	Atlantean	Park Royal	1968	
E11	KWK 26F	Daimler	Fleetline	ECW	1968	Led to order for 348-73
E12	FBV 525S	Leyland	National	LN Mark 1	1978	
--	??	Leyland	Titan	LN	1979	Ordered but cancelled
E13	WRN 413V	Leyland	National	LN Mark 2	1980	
E14	MUT 206W	Dennis	Dominator	East Lancs	1981	
E15	FHE 291V	Leyland DAB	Artic	LN	1982	
E16	EFW 855X	Neoplan	Skyliner	Neoplan	1982	
E17	WUT 449X	Bova		Bova	1982	
--	TBC 49X	Dennis	Dominator	East Lancs	1983	
--	A543 WOB	MCW	Metroliner	MCW	1984	
--	C525 EWR	Optare/VW	City Pacer	Optare	1986/7	Led to order for 401-6
--	F370 BUA	Optare	Delta	Optare	1988	
--	F633 LMJ	Leyland	Olympian	Alexander	1988	(261 subseq. bought)
--	E381 ERB	Scania	N112	Alexander	1988/9	
--	F290 MHJ	MCW	Metrobus	MCW	1989	
--	F699 OPA	Fiat	49-10	Carlyle	1989	
--	??	Leyland	Olympian	Optare	1989	
--	??	Leyland	Olympian	Alexander	1989	(261 subseq. bought)
--	F821 PBP	M-Benz	709	Wad. Stringer	1989	
--	F756 NPJ	Dennis	Javelin	Duple	1989	
--	??	Dennis	Dart	Duple	1989	
401	G541 GBV	Dennis	Dart	Duple	1990	
--	G613 EDC	CVE	Omni	CVE	1990	
--	F938 TVC	Talbot Pullman		Talbot	1990	
400	J556 GTP	Dennis	Dart	Wad. Stringer	1991	
--	G837 LWR	Optare	Delta	Optare	1991	
--	H846 UUA	MAN	11.190	Optare	1991	
--	J454 JRH	Dennis	Dart	Plaxton	1992	

The first two were not numbered, the series starting at E3, which was strictly not a demonstrator at Southend but a loan from AEC because of the late delivery of new buses (this corrects the PSV Circle Fleet History, which dates the hire to 1958 not 1959 and classifies it as a demonstration loan), then they seemed to lose interest in numbering them at all from 1983 on, with a couple of exceptions. Some hires lasted as little as a day; full details are in the PSV Circle Fleet History PF13.

The Leyland Titan mentioned above was used for route tests as part of an order for 12 (possibly 18) of the TN version of the Titan, which would have included lowering Thorpe Hall Avenue under the railway bridge to give clearance for these full height buses. In the event, Leyland advised that they were unable to supply them and instead Southend bought their final Fleetlines, 231-42. Oh, and the road was never lowered (which is why today's First 26 is routed via Bournes Green Chase and Maplin Way North).



Left: actually not listed in the PSVC Fleet History is Leyland Panther STB 957C, photographed (like all the other pics on this pair of pages) by **Paul Bateson** on 14 January 1966 outside the ST garage.

Paul was a Traffic Clerk at Southend at this time and thus experienced a number of the demonstrators of the mid/late 1960s.

Below: Ford R192 SVW 275D at Southend Hospital on

21 November 1966, and showing the unsatisfactory entrance position.





The 1963 visit by Fleetline 4559 VC didn't result in an order but subsequently Southend examined two and that led to the initial order for 26; ultimately Southend bought 72 new and others second-hand. Here Daimler have loaned Coventry Corporation 26, KWK 26F, with dual door ECW bodywork. This followed a visit by West Bromwich 101 as shown on the rear cover.

Above: at Rayleigh High Street on service 1 to Southend, 24 November 1968. Derek Giles instructs driver Alex Trail.

Right: four days later, at the Temple Sutton terminus of the 17, showing the E11 fleet number and driver Dave Lapwood collecting fares.

Both Paul Bateson





Above: there was no serious intention to buy second-hand Leyland DAB artic's that Ensign were selling, but it was fun to play with one! FHE 291V shows the exceptionally high floor layout as it loads in Chichester Road at Victoria Circus on 7 August 1982.

Below: Scania N112 E381 ERB, owned by Scania at that time but in Nottingham livery (who subsequently bought it) shows the attractive lines of its Alexander body with deep windows on both decks. It is returning from the Eastwood Belgrave Road terminus of the 29 and has just turned into The Fairway, 27 December 1988. **Both Richard Delahoy**



Top: a number of Dennis Darts were tried out. Here Duple bodied G541 JBV pulls away from Rivers Corner at Dawes Heath on 21 January 1990.



Middle: the last demonstrator tried was a Plaxton bodied Dart, soon to become common in Southend but with Thamesway, not ST! Central Bus Station 30 May 1992.
Both
Richard
Delahoy



REAR COVER: the 1960s were characterised by the battle between Leyland's Atlantean and Daimler's Fleetline for supremacy in the market for rear-engined double deckers. Southend examined multiple examples of both before settling on Daimler. So here are two of the protagonists:

Upper: Atlantean KTD 551C posed for the photographer at the Rose Inn stop, whilst on route 4 from Wakering & Landwick to Southend. 21 June 1967.

Lower: Fleetline NEA 101F, loaned by Daimler from the West Bromwich fleet, at the Kursaal on a 7 "short" to Golden Cross, 26 January 1968.

Both Paul Bateson



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