

Essex Bus Magazine Extra

Historical features special issue

Issue 2 Autumn 2022



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



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Front Cover: From the Colour Archives by Richard Delahoy

The supply of new buses was strictly controlled by the Government during the Second World War, in order to prioritise scarce resources and manufacturing capacity for the war effort. However, bus operators needed replacement vehicles and extra capacity. At first production was halted completely, then those vehicles in build or with components already manufactured were "unfrozen". After that, the Government made arrangements for selected manufacturers to build buses to a strictly controlled "utility" specification, using semi-skilled labour where possible and avoiding materials in short supply. The biggest supplier of double deck utilities was Guy with its Arab chassis, but Bristol was also authorised to build K types.

Colchester Corporation was fortunate to be allocated no less than 16 utilities, delivered between 1942 and the latter part of 1945. They replaced most of Colchester's original buses, Dennis models (variously E, EV, G, H & HS) new in 1928/9, a mix of single and double deckers. The first pair of war-time buses came in 1942, unfrozen Bristol K5Gs with Bristol bodies, 35/6. They were followed in 1943/4 by 37-45, nine Gardner-engined Guy Arabs with bodies by Park Royal (37/8, 45), Weymann (39/40) or Strachans (41-4), then between August and November 1945, 46-50 arrived, Bristol Ks but this time with AEC 6-cylinder engines, bodied by Duple (46/8) or Park Royal (47/9/50). They were to the so-called "relaxed utility" specification with less angular domes, a greater number of opening windows and upholstered seats rather than wooden-slatted ones.

Utility chassis were rugged and durable, but sadly the same could not be said for most of the bodies. Timber was still used extensively for framing but supplies of properly seasoned timber were not available and this soon showed up, with frames deteriorating after a few years, and many utilities required extensive remedial work. For others, operators simply discarded the war-time bodies and had the buses rebodied, as for example with Southend's Daimler CWA6s, both ones new to SCT and those bought second-hand from London Transport, such as 267 featured in our October 2021 issue in the colour archive item and 265 on the cover of the first EBM Extra.

It is therefore all the more remarkable that Colchester 46 still had its original body as late as June 1964 when **Trevor Brookes** photographed it on a peak hour journey in the queue leaving Colchester Bus Station - at that time the Corporation's bus stops were sited along the exit road to Queen Street, not in the bus station itself. 46 was withdrawn in June 1964 after just short of nineteen years' service; the final such bus, 47, left the fleet the following month. Both 46 & 47 had been used as driver trainers, as well as remaining available for service, since 1963. Inevitably, they went for scrap. Fleet info courtesy of PSV Circle Fleet History 3PF7.

Other Essex utility survivors into the 1960s included Bristol K JPU 640 with Ashdown's Luxury Coaches that we illustrated on page 1 of the first EBM Extra, and - of course - the Southend Corporation open-toppers, 242/4-7, converted in 1956/7 and which lasted until the end of the 1970 season, with 244 (FOP 429) surviving in preservation to the present day. One was pictured on page 21 in the same EBM Extra. Eastern National had disposed of its own utility deckers in the 1950s but then found itself owning more with the takeover of Moore Bros of Kelvedon in 1963 bringing a number of Guy Arabs. They were soon withdrawn, but one lasted in a new life.

JVX 555 was a Guy Arab II with Strachans body new to Moores in the summer of 1946 (so a "relaxed utility"). The PSV Circle record that when acquired by EN, it was in a semi-derelict condition. However, EN decided to rebuild it as a mobile uniform store in the autumn of 1963, giving it number 0555 in the service vehicle fleet. It lasted just over ten years in that role but was withdrawn in 1974 and sold to



the Eastern National Preservation Group. It was moved to EN's Canvey garage, then still operational but where the ENPG were allowed to store and work on their vehicles.

JVX 555 is seen on 10 April 1977, being moved through the muddy yard behind the garage building by a combination of tows from other ENPG vehicles. Today the former depot is the Canvey Island Transport Museum but sadly JVX 555 didn't survive and was eventually broken up, as was the towing vehicle in front, EBD 238, a one-time Bristol L coach that Eastern National acquired from United Counties in 1958 and converted to a stores lorry.

Richard Delahoy

Essex Bus Magazine Extra from the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

Issue 2

Autumn 2022

Introduction

Welcome to this second edition of **Essex Bus Magazine Extra**, an occasional series brought free to members to offer some in-depth historical articles that we don't have room for in our monthly magazine. This issue has been funded by one of the Group's longest standing members, Ted Miles, and we are extremely grateful to him for his generosity. There's a little more about Ted on the following two pages.

We hope to be able to publish two Extras each year, subject to funding. We already have sponsors for the two planned for 2023. We hope you will enjoy this extra magazine and will find the range of articles interesting and stimulating, covering a range of eras, operators and parts of Essex.

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Above: Where did we find this 1930s traffic notice? Turn to page 28 for the full story.

Correction to Issue 1: the correct spelling of the name of the original owner of B920 CSU, illustrated on page 10 was Mayo of Caterham.

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This Issue's Sponsor

We are extremely grateful to Ted Miles for his sponsorship of this issue of EBM Extra. Member 136, Ted is one of our longest standing members, with only eight people with lower numbers. He's written various pieces for us over the years, starting with memories of growing up in Walton-on-the-Naze. We return to that story for one of our major features in this issue. Ted has also recounted tales of his period working for Eastern National at Basildon in the 1960s and in particular, his time on the X10 service, Southend to London. We've published various stories in our magazine over the years and Ted also contributed to the Omnibus Society book, 'EN - Memories of a Bus Company'. If you'd like copies of those articles, please contact Richard Delahoy (details on page 1) and if you'd like to buy a copy of the OS book, there are a few left - message us and we'll put you in touch with them.

Ted's happy memories of working on the X10 led him to buy one of the Bristol FLF coaches that had worked on the service. RWC 607 was new in April 1963 as fleet number 1640, being renumbered 2604 in the August 1964 scheme. Bristol-engined, its ECW body was fitted with coach seats and luggage racking at the rear of the lower deck. Ultimately EN had 15 FLF coaches. 2604 was one of those that worked in the Tillings Travel fleet, in this case from February 1971 to January 1973 (being numbered 9604). After returning to the EN fleet, it was converted to a bus, with seats replaced, rear windows fitted and racking removed, becoming 2936 in March 1973. It

was also re-engined to a Gardner 6LW.

Ted bought the bus direct from EN in September 1980 and it was stored at Canvey with the Eastern National Preservation Group. To return the bus back to its original coach configuration was a major task and eventually the bus was returned to the former EN Central Works, by now Eastern National Engineering, where Ted financed the restoration, using original parts that had been put



in store when the coaches were first converted.

The fully restored bus was handed over to Ted in 1990 as seen in this picture from our collection. Ted is standing front centre, with, on the left Joe Long, a long-time stalwart of the ENPG, Ted's beloved wife Noel, some of the team that had worked on the bus and EN Engineering's David Rafis, right, who oversaw the work. Ted recalls that his wife spent hours restoring the seats on RWC to make them like new again, as seen in the picture left.

After being rallied for a number of years, Ted had to part with the bus and it has been in Germany since the late 1990s (we had some photos in our October 2008 & April 2021 issues) and is currently with the Big Ben Bistro, Wiesmoor.



Seen in company with ex-Westcliff Motor Services Bristol K AIN 825, RWC 607 was on display at the North Weald Rally on a pleasantly sunny 25 June 1995, one of its last rally appearances before being exported. AIN features again on page 5 of this issue in less happy circumstances. **Richard Delahoy.**

Spanish interlude - Working in Lanzarote

Later, Ted and Noel emigrated to Lanzarote. He takes up the story. "The original idea was to retire but I soon got fed up not working. I found it boring in the sun as I don't smoke or drink, so I looked for work. I learnt Spanish as they do not employ foreigners unless you learn their language.

"I met the Spanish owner of a coach company called Franyasmar Bus, to see if I could be a coach driver for him. I had a British class 1 driving licence so he took me out for a test drive and was satisfied with my driving. Work papers were sorted out and I was given a uniform (white shirts). I was soon given work, mainly midibus to start with, and after a short while I was driving the Scania/Irizar illustrated here. I did just under ten years driving, however on reaching the age of 70, I had to be retired.

"The photo shows my Scania at the port of Arrecife, waiting to take tourists on an island tour. This was the first time that Queen Mary 2 had called at Lanzarote and there was a lot of interest in the ship's visit.

"Work was very varied, including workers' contracts to hotels in Playa Blanca, and of course, lots of airport transfers. Pay was a daily rate with no overtime, so some days you gained and on others you lost, depending on flights being on schedule. The Spanish drivers were very good to me and I was accepted as one of them. You were responsible for keeping your coach clean".

Ted subsequently moved to Ireland where he lives today.



Walton Depot Remembered

by Richard Delahoy

One of Eastern National's smallest depots, Walton-on-the-Naze, is long gone but not forgotten.

Let's start with a bit of history. Walton-on-the-Naze is a seaside town located on the Essex coast about eight miles north of Clacton and



in the early 1930s had a population of just over 3,000. The Naze, incidentally, is a peninsula/headland north of the town, important for migrating birds and with a small nature reserve. Coastal erosion continues to be a significant problem, indeed, the site of the medieval village of Walton now lies nine miles out to sea. Motor bus operations in the area started in 1919 when W P Allen's Clacton & District Motor Services Ltd established routes from Walton to Clacton and Colchester. Allen had adopted the fleet name Silver Queen and in 1926 the company name was changed to reflect this.

This picture, probably dating from 1921, nicely captures those pioneering operations, with NO 2070, a Leyland Subsidy A on solid tyres and with open top body, heading for Walton from Colchester, with a Leyland X4, HK 8551, behind on a service to Harwich and Dovercourt. Both were in W P Allen's fleet. **Peter Dimmick** collection.

In the mid-1920s a rival firm, Enterprise Bus Co (initially named A Fitch & Sons) was running and competition was intense, leading in 1929 to Walton Urban District Council needing to employ a timekeeper to try to ensure they ran to the times approved by the Council, as Peter Clark has explained in more detail in the Omnibus Society's PHRG Journal (#155). Silver Queen had an office in the High Street, near The Kino bus stand, and established a depot at Naze Park in a former foundry. There's also some evidence that Enterprise garaged buses in Walton, as explained later.

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Telephone: 1031 (3 lines).

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BIGGLESWADE, Shortmead Street	...	Biggleswade 175
BISHOPS STORTFORD, South Street	...	Bishops Stortford 543
CHELMSFORD, Omnibus Station, Duke Street...	...	Chelmsford 904
and Baddow Road Office	...	905
CLACTON-ON-SEA, Pier Avenue	...	Clacton 102
COLCHESTER, Queen Street and St. Johns Street	...	Colchester 2449
DOVERCOURT AND HARWICH, Kingsway	...	Harwich 166
GRAYS, Argent Street	...	Tilbury 513
HALSTEAD, Rosemary Lane	...	Halstead 47
HITCHIN, 3, Bancroft	...	Hitchin 332
HUNTINGDON, Stukeley Road	...	Huntingdon 159
JAYWICK SANDS, Meadow Way...	...	Clacton 288
LUTON, Castle Street, Williamson Street & Park Square	...	Luton 1260
MALDON, 116a, High Street	...	Maldon 265
SOUTHEND, 49, London Road	...	Southend 4410
WALTON-ON-NAZE, Foundry Garage	...	Walton-on-Naze 69

TIME TABLES

Eastern Section
JUNE 1st, 1935, and until further notice.

Silver Queen bought Enterprise in 1930 as a prelude to both businesses being acquired by Eastern National in 1931 and hence EN took over the depot, naming it Foundry Garage. The extract left from a 1935 EN timetable book shows it listed, along with many other long-lost locations.

Pursuing the Tilling Group policy of establishing bus stations with adjacent depots, premises at 135 High Street were acquired and a new depot constructed, which duly opened in summer 1938 – the listing on the next page is from the summer 1952 timetable book (after the Midland Section had been transferred to UCOG, as explained in EBM 697, May 2022). The phone number remained as Walton 69. The new site incorporated the old Silver Queen bus stand at The Kino (the Kino being a cinema then, now amusements). The initial allocation was thought to have been 8 buses in summer, reducing to 6 in the winter. Ted Miles expands on the depot's work and allocations in the early post-war years below.

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For all Traffic Enquiries 'phone 3104

LOCAL OFFICES AND DEPOTS

		Telephone No.
BASILDON	Bull Road, Vange	Vange 2257
BISHOPS STORTFORD	South Street	Bishops Stortford 543
BRAINTREE	Hicks Bros., Ltd., Fairfield Rd.	Braintree 104
BRIGHTLINGSEA	7 & 8 Victoria Place	Brightlingsea 19
CHELMSFORD	Omnibus Station, Duke St.	Chelmsford 3104/5
CLACTON-ON-SEA	Omnibus Stn., Jackson Road and Pier Avenue	Clacton 944/5
COLCHESTER	St. John's St. and Queen St.	Colchester 2449
DOVERCOURT	Kingsway	Harwich 166
HALSTEAD	High Street	Halstead 47
MALDON	Omnibus Stn., High St.	Maldon 265
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA	3 Bradley Street and 49 London Road	Southend 44410
WALTON-ON-NAZE	Omnibus Stn., High St.	Walton 69
WEST MERSEA	High Street	West Mersea 17

Although nominally coded WN, the depot was under the control of nearby Clacton (CN) and the company allocation sheets did not usually identify the specific buses based at WN, nor were separate depot plates carried. Typically the allocation was four buses, although from September 1968 the monthly allocation list recorded just three buses required at WN. When we published detailed route working guides in 1977, the allocation was 5 buses — one Bristol MW, two Leyland Nationals and two Bristol FLFs, all used six days a week; on Sunday, only one MW and one Leyland National were required.

Maintenance was carried out by Clacton and the allocation would be swapped as necessary to cover for this. Latterly the allocation had reduced to just 3 Leyland Nationals by the mid-1980s, but from May 1986 they were replaced by the new CoastLine minibuses.

With space to spare, Walton was also used in winter to store surplus buses under cover and that was to lead to disaster, sadly. In the winter of 1996, open top

Bristol VRs 3500/1 (WNO 546L & NPU 974M) were stored there along with the preserved 1939 ex-Westcliff Bristol K, AJN 825, then in the care of Thamesway. On Saturday 14 December that year a fire, started deliberately, completely destroyed the pair of VRs and resulted in serious damage to the nearside of AJN. Luckily, the bus had a wooden platform door and this stopped the flames reaching the interior, but the damage was extensive and took years and a massive amount of hard work to repair. AJN remains with us today, fully restored and appearing at rallies/events in the local area.

However, this was not the first fire to have destroyed buses garaged in Walton. Thanks to Peter Dimmick, we have a copy of a press cutting from the Walton Times & East Essex Gazette of 21 December 1929, 'Destructive Garage Blaze, Motor 'Buses and Lorries Destroyed at Walton'. The fire was in a motor garage in West Street belonging to Messrs W Grant & Sons, described as contractors and coal merchants. Amongst the vehicles destroyed were a '32-seater Leyland Tiger Enterprise omnibus and a 16-seater Crossley 'bus belonging to the same company'. So did Enterprise rent spaces there to outstation a couple of buses locally?



In the post-deregulation era of the bus industry, there was no future for small depots like Walton and sadly it closed as an operational depot on 25 May 1996. The final allocation comprised three Mercedes minibuses from Clacton depot and one Dennis Dart from Colchester. Used for storage after closure, it was demolished in January 1999. There'll be more about the final days of life at Walton in a subsequent issue of EBM.

Apologies for the poor quality of this photo, but it is the only known one of AJN immediately after the fire, still inside the depot building, showing the damage incurred. Top left in the picture is the wing mirror of one of the two open top VRs that were completely destroyed. The roof of the building has suffered some damage but remained intact.

Martin Farmer

Pictures of Walton depot are few and far between, but various contributors have searched their collections for us.

Peter Carr took this shot in 1974, nicely recording the offices and separate depot building, with a Grey-Green coach laying over outside.



After closure, **Andrew Colebourne** helpfully recorded the buildings before redevelopment. The date is 8 November 1997 and Hedingham's Dennis Dart L241 (N241 EWC) is laying over whilst on service 105. How many of us never bothered to take pictures of bus station and depot buildings, regretting that omission later?

The scene today: **Chris Stewart** took this shot of the offices, long since converted to a café, on 18 August 2022. The Revved Up Tea Bar obviously seeks to attract bikers and gets good reviews online - such as "A great café, with excellent home-made cake served with dry wit and no nonsense. You'll get a fine cuppa here, well worth a visit". Their bacon rolls are also praised. Buses still pass the door but terminate a few hundred yards further along the promenade at the Columbine Centre. The depot building was replaced by bungalows.



Walton depot would see buses and coaches visiting from other EN depots. One of the more unusual was 102 (7652 VW), a Commer Avenger with Yeates coachwork, new in 1960 to Moores of Kelvedon, who were acquired by EN in 1963. Initially numbered 039, it became 102 in 1964 and lasted until 1968. Here it displays a CN (Clacton) allocation plate in cream to match the coach livery but the usual red fleetnumber plate.

Alan Osborne photographed it on the depot forecourt on 3 September 1967 on a Group tour of the Tending area.



Starting in 1982, EN ran a couple of "Seaside Special" summer services to Walton on various days of the week. Here we see buses on routes 53E and 70E laying over inside the depot before their return trips.

The middle picture was taken on 24 July 1983 by **Keith Shayshutt** and features Clacton's 1768 in the centre on the 70E and Chelmsford's 1917 on the 53E, whilst locally based 1705 is on the left. It was a docking spare at CN and was possibly part of the Walton allocation at the time. It's not obvious why a CN allocated bus would be on the 70E, which ran from Bishop's Stortford, perhaps it was covering for a breakdown.



The lower picture from June 1985 reveals Brentwood's Leyland Tiger/Alexander 1122 nose in and VR 3022 on the 70E back to Bishop's Stortford. 3022 has no depot plate and was officially allocated to CR during June, moving to BS in July. It was noted on 70E a number of times that summer.

Keith Shayshutt collection





As explained above, with such a small allocation, Walton had room to spare to store buses, particularly open toppers in winter. **Andrew Colebourne** was on hand to capture three such occurrences.

Top: Bristol VR 3500 (converted from bus 3026, WNO 546L) is emerging from hibernation on 26 May 1990, although we are not sure what work it performed that summer. In the autumn it was noted in use as a driver trainer, with the tarpaulin top cover seen here in place. Sadly, both this and sister 3501 were destroyed by arson inside the depot on the night of 14 December 1996.



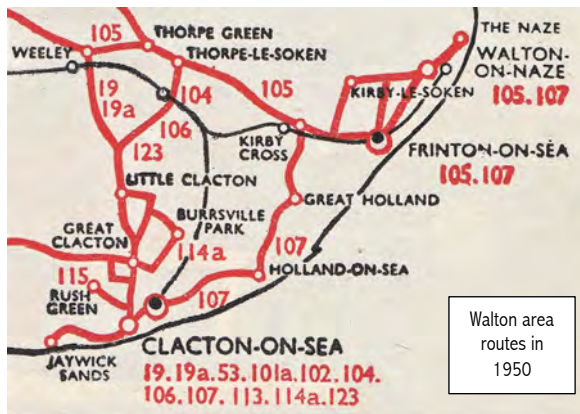
Centre: the two Bristol KSW open toppers that lasted longest in the fleet, 2383 & 2384 (WNO 479/80) were ready for winter storage on 26 October 1990. They didn't always go into store all winter, for example in April 1991, 2384 was in use as a driver trainer and 2383 similarly in the winter of 1991/2.



Bottom: less expected visitors found in store on 2 April 1988 were a pair of Park Royal-bodied Daimler Fleetlines that Eastern National had acquired through the takeover of Coastal Red just over a month earlier. They are E0F 246L and NOB 331M; neither ran for EN and both were sold to a dealer in May 1988, so their stay at Walton was very short-lived.

These shots nicely illustrate the airy interior of the depot building, which had folding wooden doors to two sides to assist in vehicle manoeuvring. As the picture on page 6 shows, after the fire, one set of doors was replaced with steel ones.

Ted Miles, sponsor of this issue of EBM Extra, recalls his days at Walton as a young bus spotter, from the late 1940s through to 1956.



Living then in Halstead Road, Lower Kirby, fortunately his neighbour two doors way, Bob Sloegrove, was a conductor at WN and Ted was able to spend many happy hours with him from a young age, such that Ted knew how to complete a waybill, set destination blinds and so on.

He explains "The bungalow at the rear of the depot belonged to Eastern National and was the living quarters for the Walton Inspector, in my time this was Stan Holder who had transferred from Grays on 1 October 1952 on the closure of the garage there (it was transferred to London Transport). There were 10 drivers and 10 conductors plus one part-time man to refuel and clean the inside of the buses at night. In August an extra bus was allocated with a crew temporarily posted from Clacton. The routes operated then were:

- 105 Walton – Colchester, hourly
- 107 Walton – Clacton, half-hourly in winter, every 15 minutes in summer and with duplication
- 111 Walton – Harwich in the school summer holidays.

"In addition, a Bedford OB coach was allocated in summer for afternoon & evening tours, driven by a Mr Webber who lived locally and worked at Clacton in winter".

Below: a scene Ted would have enjoyed many times. Lodekka XVX 21 is outside the depot, ready for another 105 run to Colchester, showing Frinton-on-Sea on its intermediate blind, although it only passed Frinton "rail gates" - the station level crossing - see the next page for the controversy this caused for 105 & 107 users. Part of the WN allocation, as explained earlier, it carries a CN depot plate and 1954 numbering scheme fleet number 1435; it had been new as 4210 and was to become 2404 in 1964. **Chris Stewart collection**



Route 107 required duplication at times. Ted recalls that in winter, the early closing day in Frinton, Walton and Clacton, Wednesdays, meant a lunchtime peak load. Then to cope with the cinema turning out times, the 2215 and 2255 ex Clacton were duplicated to Holland on Sea, Brighton Road, by one bus that doubled back after the first of these two runs. In the summer school holidays, the 1015 Clacton to Walton needed a relief from Kirby Cross to Walton to cope with the large number of people leaving their bed & breakfast accommodation in Lower Kirby, heading for a day on the beach.

In 1951/2, the usual bus allocation comprised:

Bristol K5G 4051 (ONO 72) and Bristol KSW5Gs 4143/51/7 (SHK 525, TNO 676/82). When required at CN for maintenance, the regular replacement was another K5G, 3945 (MPU 6). The OB coach was 4069 (ONO 90).

By 1955 the allocation had moved on and there were three Bristol LD5Gs, 1435/53/4 (XVX 21, 214 BPU, 882 CEV) with K types 1284 (MPU 6) and 1319 (ONO 52) as spares.

Destination blinds also caused a local row, with the passing points on the 107 proclaiming "Holland on Sea, Frinton on Sea". The problem was, buses were not allowed past the notorious "Frinton gates" into Frinton itself, meaning a long walk of almost three-quarters of a mile along Connaught Avenue to the beach. After many complaints from passengers who were misled by the promise of going to Frinton on Sea, the second passing point was altered to read Kirby Cross instead. Of course, it would have been better had buses actually gone into Frinton, as today's service 9 does, but that had to wait many years. The large employer in Frinton, furniture manufacturer Mummery & Harris, had fought to get buses allowed into Frinton, to benefit their workers, but to no avail.

Ted wrote in more detail about the work at Walton, with a sample duty sheet, in our April 1997 edition, for a copy, please contact me.

Picture: a couple of years after Ted had moved away, in July 1959 **Ian Sharpe** caught a couple of summer visitors on express service, Bristol KSW 1406 (VNO 858) and Bristol LS 371 (FJN 166), both on service P from Harlow to Walton via Clacton.



This service was the successor to the former Hicks' route 12 from Bishop's Stortford to Clacton. It ran daily during the summer, June to late September. After Hicks came under EN control, for the 1953 season the service was allocated letter P in EN's established series and was back projected to start from Harlow on Saturdays in July & August. From

the 1956 season it started from Harlow daily, still only to Clacton but now continuing on Saturdays to Jaywick Sands. From 1957 it was extended to Walton on Saturdays in the low season and daily in high season. The Jaywick service became new route Q, summer Saturdays only. This pattern lasted into the early 1960s, then in 1962 the lettered express services received X numbers instead, the P becoming X50 and the Q, X51. From 1964 the Jaywick X51 ceased, leaving the X50 to continue to run to Walton. Latterly it saw the magnificent FLF coaches and was joint with Biss Bros who took over operations, using a hired EN FLF coach in 1971. It became service 191 under National Express by the mid-1970s. I've not been able to trace the date it ceased - can anyone identify that, please?

In Ian's picture, the LS coach is the service car through to Harlow, the Braintree allocated KSW (with platform doors) is a duplicate as far as Stortford. Sister KSW VNO 859 is of course preserved and appears at rallies locally, although not blinded up for route P as that letter doesn't feature on the blinds now fitted!

In a subsequent issue, we'll bring the Walton story up to date with some memories from one of the final group of drivers based there, Peter Dimmick.

More First Essex Scotland Connections

by Steve Sellars

Some of the buses that have operated for First both in Essex and in Scotland were featured in EBM Extra 1. Since then, First Essex have acquired some more ex-Scottish vehicles. Here is a further varied selection.

Additional material by Adam Kelleher.



As reported in EBM 696, First Essex have acquired seven Alexander Dennis E40D / Enviro 400 MMCs from First Glasgow, fleet numbers 33983-9. They were driven down from Glasgow on Saturday 26 March 2022. They are now all allocated to Basildon.

When in Glasgow they were used on the services which use the M8/M80 motorway in & out of Glasgow to the outlying towns of Cumbernauld (X3) or Kirkintilloch and surrounds (X85/X87). These towns were historically served by Scottish Bus Group buses rather than Strathclyde PTE routes and both had bus depots in them. When Kirkintilloch depot closed, its routes moved to Possilpark depot in Glasgow and when that too closed the routes moved to Cumbernauld depot. Cumbernauld was then sold to Stagecoach and the routes on which First ran in completion with Stagecoach were withdrawn. The X3, which didn't have a Stagecoach version, moved base to the huge Caledonia depot in Glasgow which First had built, initially to house the buses from Larkfield depot when that had closed.

Caledonia now runs the routes previously operated from Larkfield, Cumbernauld and Parkhead (a former PTE depot, now also closed). The three operations are still run separately despite being at the one location, but buses are occasionally used by different units, although I haven't any photographs of these Enviro 400s being used on any routes apart from those operated by the 'Cumbernauld' unit at Caledonia. The HB suffix (Highbridge) to the fleet numbers was to make it clear that these buses were not interchangeable with the earlier (and most later) deliveries of Enviro 400s, as some of the city routes to East Kilbride are allocated Enviro 400s but can only use low height buses due to the clearance under a railway bridge the route passes.

There was a route diagram on the nearside advert panel and general marketing on the offside. In the photo above, taken outside Buchanan Bus Station in Glasgow on 3 October 2017, 33985 (SN65 OGA) on route X85 (with X85/87 branding) is being followed by 33983 (SN65 OFY) on route X3 (with X3 branding). **Steve Sellars.** These two buses also featured in a photo together, at Westway, Chelmsford, shortly after arrival from Glasgow, in EBM 696. 33983 later received Platinum Jubilee livery, as illustrated in EBM 698.

In October 2002, Essex Buses allocated fleet numbers 745-752 within their block for low floor Dennis Darts to eight East Lancs bodied examples, registered P852-9 VUS, due from First Glasgow. Five of these, 745-8 & 750, were delivered between October and December that year, but the other three, 749, 751 and 752 did not arrive at the time. They finally turned up in March, April and May 2004 respectively. There had been a depot fire in Glasgow earlier in 2002 which had destroyed a number of vehicles and so the reason these were delivered to Essex so much later than planned may have been as they were helping to cover for the subsequent vehicle shortage. They arrived with Essex just after the First Essex fleet had been renumbered into the Sema system, so never carried their Essex allocated fleet numbers. Indeed, they had been renumbered into the Sema system whilst still at Glasgow, to 40777-9 respectively. Meanwhile, the original five received Sema numbers 42852-7 in March 2004. Such were the vagaries of the early Sema system, with vehicles being renumbered on a company by company basis rather than nationally, as had been done by Stagecoach when they adopted a similar scheme. So there was the bizarre incidence, for example, of First Essex P856 VUS being numbered 40777, the next in registration sequence, P857 VUS, being numbered 42857, and the next, P858 VUS being 40778!



Above: P859 VUS, MD8, in September 2000 at Chalmers Street, Clydebank, outside the Co-op store. This is the main bus loading point in Clydebank with the Rail Station adjacent. It is working a service from Dumbarton to Glasgow, usually operated by Alexander PS bodied B10Ms at this time, the Darts were usually working Dumbarton local routes. Service 205 was later renumbered as part of the 1 series of routes which form a core part of the Glasgow bus network providing a fast link between Clydebank and Glasgow.

Steve Sellars

Right: P853 VUS was new to Strathclyde Buses as MD2 in February 1997. When it moved to Essex in November 2002 it received fleet number 746, then Sema number 42853 in March 2004. It is seen at Southend Travel Centre on 10 June 2007 on route 20, although it is branded for Metro route 27. **Adam Kelleher**



In the early part of the 21st Century, Aberdeen was one of the depots selected by First to move to Volvo contract maintenance, so all non-Volvo buses were to be transferred out. In the end the maintenance plan didn't go ahead and some non-Volvo vehicles remained, but the small fleet of step-entrance Alexander Dash bodied Dennis Darts and non-articulated Mercedes-Benz vehicles all still transferred out to other First fleets. The Darts, 201-206 (N201-6 VSA), new in December 1995 and January 1996, all moved to Essex Buses in June 2001, becoming 2921-6, later Sema 47101-6.



204 on route 11 in Union Street, Aberdeen, outside the Trinity Shopping Centre in November 2000. Aberdeen had been allocating their prime vehicles to the premium 'Gold Service' routes which were supposedly higher specification buses; the Mercedes 0405s had air conditioning and the then new style individual seats. These Darts had neither of the extras but when new they received 'Gold Service' lettering and the mainly cream GRT Advance livery of green squiggly lines (simply because they were new vehicles at the time). **Steve Sellars**

On 26 March this year Group member Jack Benec went to Glasgow to collect one of the Enviro 400 MMCs mentioned on page 11 and he took a photo of Optare Solo 53102 (E002 FLB) which was included in EBM 696. This vehicle had been new to Essex Buses as 502 in red livery for TfL route 193. Here is sister First Glasgow 53103 (E002 FLC), new to Essex Buses as 503, two and a half years earlier, on 19 September 2019. At Clydebank Railway Station on the local M60 route to Drumchapel, this also has a Glasgow bound service (60) along its route but faces competition from Avondale buses between Clydebank and Drumchapel and the route the Solo is working enhances the First bus frequency on that section. **Steve Sellars**



Postscript: First Scotland East vehicles were included in EBM Extra 1; this company was sold to McGill's Group from 20 September 2022.

Looking Back At . . Network Colchester by Richard Delahoy

The Network Colchester brand lasted from 2004 to 2016. We take a look back at how it came about and why it ended.

Municipal passenger transport in Colchester commenced in 1904 with the opening of a tramway consisting of four routes, to Lexden, Hythe, East Gates and North Station; a fifth line, to Old Heath (Recreation Ground) opened in 1906. Trolleybus powers were later granted but never used and instead, motor buses replaced the trams in 1928/9. Bus services gradually expanded to serve the growing town and the fleet stood at 59 vehicles by 1986. That year the transport undertaking, which had changed its name from Colchester Corporation Transport to Colchester Borough Transport in 1974, became a stand-alone company but still owned by the Borough Council. Historically, CCT/CBT had operated the town services and Eastern National the country routes but in autumn 1993 the privatised EN started competing aggressively on town routes and this "bus war" seriously destabilised the already loss-making CBT. This led the Council to sell the beleaguered company for a nominal £1 (plus taking on £750,000 of debt) to the British Bus group in November 1993. Cowie plc gained control of British Bus in 1996 and then adopted the Arriva name, so CBT became Arriva Colchester in April 1998.

Although peace had broken out after the "bus war" ended, Arriva Colchester had performed poorly in financial terms and in August 2004 the business (but not the legal entity) was sold to the TGM Group, then an AIM-listed company. The sale did not include the Magdalen Street depot, which had remained in the ownership of the Council throughout, leased to the bus company. Reflecting the loss-making position and poor prospects, Arriva in effect gave away the business and paid TGM a sum to cover the expected losses for one year, to give time for the business to be turned round. Under the direction of TGM bus director Bill Hiron (who majority owns Stephensons and now also NIBS and Galloway, and had an interest in Excel at Stansted), TGM rapidly set about restructuring the company, revising the routes, adopting a new livery of white/blue/yellow and creating a new image as **Network Colchester**. Operations were placed on the O Licence of Burtons Coaches Ltd, TGM's existing nearby coach business based in Haverhill, for convenience, since TGM had only acquired the assets rather than the limited company that Arriva owned, and hence the O Licence could not be transferred. Here I must confess to a professional involvement - my transport consultancy was engaged to undertake some of the back-office functions that Arriva had previously provided centrally from Maidstone, so I rapidly found myself planning routes and timetables, registering services, programming ticket machines, compiling fare charts and a host of other commercial tasks.

The last brand-new bus for CBT had come as long ago as 1992 (a solitary Leyland Lynx, 27, K27 EWC) and under British Bus and Arriva newer vehicles had been transferred to sister companies and a motley collection of second-hand vehicles had joined the fleet, ranging from Leyland Atlanteans and Olympians, through Leyland Nationals & Greenways, ex Grey-Green Volvo B10Ms with East Lancs single deck bus bodies, ex London Metrobuses, DAF/Ikarus saloons and various minibuses, to newer Dennis Darts. At the time of the Arriva sale to TGM, the fleet stood at 38, a somewhat disparate assortment ranging from 7 to 19 years old, comprising:

Single deck bus: 4 x Volvo B6/Plaxton, Alexander or Northern Counties, 4 x DAF SB220/Ikarus, 5 x Leyland Lynx, 7 x Dart/Plaxton or East Lancs, 4 x Mercedes 0810 or Vario/Plaxton;

Double deck: 5 x Volvo B10M Citybus/East Lancs or Northern Counties, and 6 x Leyland Olympian/ECW or Leyland;

Coaches: 1 x Leyland Tiger/Plaxton, 2 x Scania K113/Van Hool.

Of these, only 6 (all Olympians) had been new to CBT and none of the fleet was low floor. Most vehicles passed to TGM but five were only taken on short term loan.

An early decision was to update the fleet - the TGM board readily agreed to invest in some new buses, not least to signal to the staff, public and competitors that the new owners meant business and were going to invest. Route 1 was one of the key corridors and a batch of 8 low-floor Plaxton bodied Dennis Darts was ordered (plus a pair for Burtons' Haverhill operations) to enable conversion of that route to new buses, with suitable branding. They arrived in December 2004 as 360-7 (and the last were only withdrawn in March 2022).

Bill Hiron notes that "the staff were brilliant and generally welcomed the new local focus, investment, and the shortening of reporting lines". Changing the image meant repainting buses into the new attractive Network Colchester colours, based on the TGM standard scheme, the first being native Olympian 347 (H47 MJN) at the end of August 2004, featured on the cover of that September's Essex Bus News, in our old black & white days, and also on the cover of the first Network Colchester branded timetable book in November 2004, this time in colour, as shown here.





The logo (left on repainted 347 and right as applied to buses still in Arriva colours) was designed by a freelance designer who had previously been in the marketing team at Thamesway and Eastern National



Subsequent new purchases were six Scania/East Lincs double deckers, 340 (later 101) in 2005, 102 in 2006, 103/4 in 2008 and finally Optare bodied 105/6 in 2009, but some didn't last long in Colchester before being transferred away, with only the first pair left by the end of 2012, and no further new buses came to the fleet for six years until the five Park & Ride E200s in April 2015. Used stock was sourced from within the TGM Group but sadly the fleet never fully achieved a uniformity of livery or image.

TGM successfully stabilised the business and focused on the core commercial routes of 1, 2 and 8/8A, but operations were not confined to the town and Network Colchester buses have been seen further afield on contract and tendered services such as to Ipswich (93/95), East Bergholt & Dedham (247), Walton (105/7/9), Braintree, Finchingfield & Gt Bardfield (9/9A) and Chelmsford to Halstead on Sundays (352) amongst others, along with the "chicken run" works contracts to Witham. Then after the collapse of Stansted Transit in 2009, to Stansted Airport on the 133, as Arriva Colchester still do today. For example, the 2011 timetable book lists over 25 route numbers.

In 2005, TGM picked up the former school contract operations of the failed Supreme Coaches business in Colchester, along with the lease of their modern workshops and parking area on the Whitehall Industrial Estate in Hythe. Initially maintenance on Network Colchester buses was undertaken there, before an extended yard was created and the complete operations moved to there from the old Corporation tramsheds and depot in Magdalen Street in March 2008.

Then in a somewhat unexpected development, TGM Group sold out to Arriva early in 2008, who thus found themselves back in Colchester once more! It has to be said that Arriva were more interested in other parts of TGM and ended up with Colchester as part of the overall package rather than through a desire to return to the town, but nevertheless they have continued to operate the Colchester business ever since. Shortly afterwards, in April 2008, the now Arriva-owned TGM Group acquired Excel Passenger Logistics at Stansted, Flight Delay Services at Manchester and Excel Gatwick. Then TGM sold the Haverhill based part of the Burtons Coaches business to its manager, Paul Cooper, in 2010 (who set up a new company, Yellow Star Travel Services, to facilitate the purchase, although sadly it failed the following year) and renamed the Colchester operations as Network



Colchester Ltd. Finally, the legal name matched the branding introduced six years earlier! Later that year, in August, the Essex operations (Colchester and Excel, but not Southend) were transferred to the TGM Group O licence and control of Arriva's Harlow depot was also passed to the TGM part of Arriva, adopting the Network Harlow name - a story for another day (and more work for me!). The revised logo shown here was introduced in summer 2011, reflecting

an updating of the TGM corporate image. It appeared on a white background on buses.

The fleet size fluctuated over the years as the core commercial services were supplemented by tender wins. For example, at the end of 2007, immediately prior to Arriva taking over TGM, Network Colchester had 43 buses, still an eclectic mix of types:

DD: 5 x Volvo Citybus/East Lincs or Alexander, 2 x DAF DB250/Plaxton, 3 x Dennis Trident/East Lincs or Alexander, 1 x Leyland Olympian/Leyland and 2 x Scania OmniCity/East Lincs;

SD: 18 x Dennis Dart SLF/ADL or Caetano, 4 x Dart step entrance/Plaxton or East Lincs, 2 x Optare Solo, 5 x Volvo B10BLE/Alexander and 1 x Mercedes 814/Plaxton. That's 7 different chassis manufacturers and 7 different bodybuilders!

There were frequent transfers of buses to and from other parts of the TGM Group, which used a uniform livery style so that the acquired buses fitted in to the native Colchester fleet, although few (if any?) of the acquisitions received Network Colchester fleet names. But some buses transferred in were in a variety of other liveries and as noted above, a uniformity of image was never achieved.

Inevitably, rationalisation of company and reporting structures eventually saw the TGM Group within Arriva disbanded and the Colchester operations were transferred into the existing Arriva Kent Thameside Ltd company at the end of 2014 (service registrations were altered from March 2015). The operations were rebranded as Arriva during 2015 and that's where this part of the story ends. It's not entirely clear when the Network Colchester name finally ceased to be used. We noted in October 2015 that Dart SLF/Caetano 3406 had received Arriva names (but not full Arriva livery), this may have been the start of the end. Then in January 2016 we recorded that 3421 (AY54 FPZ) was the first repaint out of TGM livery and into full Arriva livery. The Arriva livery also appeared on buses transferred in from elsewhere within Southern Counties. In May 2016 Arriva advised us that a "full repaint programme over the next few weeks that will see SXConnect, Network Harlow and Network Colchester liveries replaced by standard Arriva livery". Finally, in our September 2016 issue we noted that "a flurry of repaints has seen TGM livery eliminated with the exception of Dart SLF 3314 (S312 JUA), which is not due to receive Arriva colours". That bus was withdrawn at the end of 2016, thus finally marking the very end of the Network Colchester image.

Bill Hiron sums up the experience: "The transformation by TGM was a success. The focus on key corridors, investment in new buses, reduction in both local and central management overheads, new image - all resulted in increased revenues and reduced costs. Very quickly the operation was transformed from losing a lot of money to making quite reasonable profits - hence justifying the investment in further new vehicles, including the double deckers. And of course cascades of decent modern buses like the ex-route 726 Volvos. Most importantly, it was being locally managed once again, which particularly in a competitive environment, was very important, remembering that a large proportion of Network Colchester customers had a choice of operator".

Here therefore is a selection of photos depicting the Network Colchester years. We don't have room to illustrate all the different vehicle types but hope this selection will give a flavour of the years when there was a fresh new image for Colchester's buses.

The old order: the acquired fleet included G643 BPH, a 15-year-old Northern Counties bodied Volvo B10M, still carrying Arriva names and fleet number 7643 when photographed in the yard at Magdalen Street depot on 16 October 2004. It had been new to London Country South West. It later received Network Colchester colours.

And the new: displayed at the annual "Cobham" gathering, actually on Wisley airfield, on 3/4/05 is Dart 367, branded for route 1.





The first new double decker was 340 (later 101), AY55 DKA, a Scania N94UD/East Lancs, bought specifically for the Suffolk CC contract for service 93 to Ipswich where it's seen in the Old Cattle Market Bus Station when brand new on 9 September 2005. In the background is L508 CPI, formerly Arriva DS006 and still in Arriva livery, now with Network Colchester names. Also East Lancs bodied, it was a step-entrance Dennis Dart and was withdrawn by mid-2006.

Photos left and below courtesy **Network Colchester**.

All other photos by **Richard Delahoy**.

A later new decker was 104, YN08 OBZ, one of a pair new in 2008. Again a Scania, N230UD bodied by East Lancs, now to the Olympus design, it was photographed in the depot yard on 18 June 2008, brand new and showing route branding for core cross-town service 1.

Other buses were branded for the 2 and 8 but all branding was later removed as it became confusing when buses were used on different services, eg on Essex CC tendered services. This bus and sister YN08 LBY (103) later moved on within TGM but ended up with SBC Leisure and continue to be used across Essex on schools and rail replacement work. Likewise former Colchester 105/6 (YT59 NZM/N) are now with Stephensons.



Attending the North Weald rally on 5 July 2009 was 156, T406 SMV, one of a pair of Dennis Tridents with East Lancs Lolyne bodies, new in 1999 to Metrobus. The blinds are programmed for the local service 339 to the rally site - a number today better associated with the Epping Ongar Railway service linking those two places (and Shenfield).

The pair (the other being 155, T405 SMV) were later painted into Arriva livery and transferred to Kent early in 2013 in exchange for a pair of ex-Fastrack Volvo single deckers. 156, by then Arriva 5443, also ran at Harlow in 2015 - their solitary double decker - and during that spell was loaned back to Colchester. It was finally withdrawn towards the end of 2016.

Further Tridents were five Alexander bodied examples, three 52 plates (185/90/1, KN52 NCD, NDX, NEF, new to Armchair for TfL services) and two older ones, W395/6 WBB, 195/6. In this shot 195 is in St Botoph's Street en route to Monkwick on service 8. This pair of long wheelbase Tridents were new to Arriva Northumbria in 2000 and migrated to Colchester in September 2009, initially branded for the 8 but by the date of this shot taken on 13 May 2011 had lost their branding. This pair moved on to Arriva at Gillingham in summer 2013 for a new contract there.



Double deck variety increased in autumn 2014 with the transfer into Colchester of three ex-Arriva London VLV class Volvo B7TL/Wrights, smartly converted to single door and outshopped in TGM livery, albeit without fleetnames. 6132 (LJO3 MHV) was in a wet Osborne Street on 24 July 2015 on the 1A. The other two were 6130/1, LF02 PLN/O. They all gained Arriva corporate livery in 2016 and moved on to Tunbridge Wells, being withdrawn from there late in 2021.

Turning to the single deck fleet, eight Caetano bodied Dennis Darts were operated, all long versions (more recently, under Arriva, short ones have been used, the last of those having only recently been withdrawn). 513, HX51 LRL, was one of six new to TGM in 2001, all of which were transferred to Colchester in 2007. Here it is approaching the Grange Way depot off service 6 (introduced mainly as a crew shuttle to/from the town centre) on 13 May 2011, followed by Omnidekka 102 returning from the "chicken run" works contract 802. Both carry green branding for route 2.





Single deck contrasts at the old Colchester bus station:

A total of 7 heavyweight Volvo B10BLE saloons with Alexander bodies, new to TGM for London route 726 to Heathrow Airport, were operated. Here 381 (later 901, then 403, then 3830, W901 UJM) is in a rather battered condition on 21 March 2006, branded for the 2 but operating on route 1. The single track number blinds caused problems and I'm not sure if proper blinds were ever made/fitted. Two of this batch later gained Arriva livery on transfer to Guildford.

Step-entrance Dart/Plaxton 303, M723 CGO, also appears to be having problems with its 3-track number blind on 21 March 2006 as it loads for East Bergholt on Essex CC tendered service 247. It was another bus that had originated with Metrobus where it had the numbers on the left and destination on the right, now curiously reversed for use in Colchester. The 247 was a contract held by Arriva before they sold the Colchester business to TGM but was lost on re-tender to Beestons in August 2006.



Finally, another step-entrance Dart, East Lancs bodied 309, M526 MPM, was part of the fleet that TGM inherited from Arriva (DS15) in 2004 but had been repainted by the date of this photo, 21 March 2006. It's on its branded route, 8/8A, although they really needed bigger buses than 40 seaters.

I'm very grateful to Bill Hiron and to Keith Sadler - who has worked for the business through all the different phases of bus operations in Colchester - for their input to this article (but as ever, all opinions expressed are those of the author).

The Eastern National Bristol SC

by Alan Osborne

Between 1954 & 1958 Eastern National purchased 22 Bristol SCs with ECW bodywork but they had short lives in Essex.

For many years the Tilling group fleets used vehicles supplied by Bristol Commercial vehicles, their chassis types were designated in alphabetical order. During the early 1930s, the Bristol G (double-decker) and J (single-decker) formed the major output. In 1937 new models were introduced, the K (double-decker) and L (single-decker). At the 1948 Commercial Motor Show two new M-type chassis were displayed, however, neither were bodied and no further examples were built. Subsequently Bristol introduced chassis designations that represented the design characteristics rather than continuing the alphabetical sequence. The first chassis marque was the LD (Lo-Dekka), followed by the LS (underfloor Light Saloon). To complete the initial range the SC (Small Capacity) model was introduced.

The first two prototypes were built in 1954 and entered service with Eastern National as 395/6 (724/5 APU). 395, chassis no. SCX.001, was of semi-integral construction with a 27'6" x 7'6" 35-seat body by Eastern Coach Works, powered by a Gardner 4LK four cylinder 3.8L diesel engine rated at 60 bhp at 2100 rpm, designated as SC4LK. At just 3 tons 18 cwt, it was around two tons lighter than an equivalent capacity L type. 396, chassis no. SCX.002, had the same bodywork, but was powered by a Perkins P6 six cylinder 4.7L diesel engine rated at 86 bhp at 2600 rpm, accordingly designated SC6P. The Perkins engine had been intended as an alternative to the 4LK but persistent problems with oil leakage led to the option being withdrawn and 396 itself was re-engined with a 4LK in 1958. The 4LK was smaller and lighter than the four-cylinder version of the better-known Gardner LW range. Both vehicles toured BTC and Scottish Bus Group companies as demonstrators, as explained in Chris Stewart's article 'Peaceful Demonstrations' in our July 2021 issue (EBM 687).

Full SC production commenced in 1957, a total of 323 models were built, supplied as 35-seat buses or 33-seat coaches. They entered service with Lincolnshire (113), Eastern Counties (88), Crosville (79), Eastern National (22), United Counties (6), Thames Valley (5), Cumberland (5), Red & White (4) and United Welsh (1). It is noticeable that Bristol did not order any! EN's ones comprised:

Registration	Fleet Number	August 1964 allocated number	New	Seating	Allocation at January 1964	Withdrawn
724 APU	395	(These vehicles had already been withdrawn)	1954	B35F	Delicensed	April 1964
725 APU	396		1954	B35F	BN (Basildon)	April 1964
601 JPU	424		1957	B35F	CR (Colchester)	April 1964
602 JPU	425		1957	B35F	MN (Maldon)	April 1964
603 JPU	426		1957	B35F	MN (Maldon)	April 1964
604 JPU	427		1957	B35F	CN (Clacton)	April 1964
605 JPU	435		1957	B35F	Withdrawn	January 1964
606 JPU	436		1957	B35F	Withdrawn	January 1964
607 JPU	437		1957	B35F	Withdrawn	January 1964
608 JPU	438	1000	1957	B35F	BN (Basildon)	May 1964
609 JPU	439	1001	1957	B35F	CF (Chelmsford)	May 1964
610 JPU	440	1002	1957	B35F	SD (Southend)	May 1964
611 JPU	445	1003	1957	B35F	MN (Maldon)	May 1964
612 JPU	446	1004	1957	B35F	BN (Basildon)	May 1964
9572 F	447	1005	1957	B35F	CR (Colchester)	May 1964
9573 F	448	1006	1957	B35F	SD (Southend)	May 1964
9574 F	450	1007	1958	B35F	BN (Basildon)	May 1964
9575 F	451	1008	1958	B35F	CN (Clacton)	May 1964
9576 F	452	1009	1958	B35F	HD (Halstead)	May 1964
9577 F	453	1010	1958	B35F	MN (Maldon)	May 1964
9578 F	454	1011	1958	B35F	SD (Southend)	May 1964
9579 F	455	1012	1958	B35F	CR (Colchester)	May 1964

A brief explanation of the 1954 fleet numbering scheme may help. New vehicles were generally numbered in sequence when ordered / delivered, regardless of type, although there were separate sequences for single (3 digits) and double-decker (4 digits) vehicles. The single-decker sequence did not distinguish between buses and coaches. It was only from August 1964 that vehicles were numbered in blocks by type. So the SCs listed above were numbered 395-6, 424-7, 435-40, 445-448, 450-5 as shown. Immediately before these were Bristol LSs 359-394 (buses, dual purpose vehicles and coaches) and immediately following were Bristol MWs 456-577 (also buses, dual purpose vehicles and coaches). In the gaps were 397-423, more LSs (just buses), 428-34 (more LS buses, except 433 was the first MW coach and 434 the first MW bus), 441-4 (more LS buses) and 449 (the second MW bus).

395/6 were crew-operated when new, having a full-width glazed bulkhead behind the cab, but all of Eastern National's production SCs were built for OMO. 395 was converted to OMO by ECW in June 1956 and 396 by Eastern National by March 1962. Seating was unaltered by the conversions. Below: 445 (611 JPU), allocated to Maldon (MN), outside Chelmsford garage. **Alan Osborne Collection**



The vehicles were used on lightly trafficked services as well as contract work. The class was withdrawn somewhat prematurely. The first to go were 435-7, sold to Cumberland Motor Services in January 1964. In April 1964, 395/6 and 424-7 were all sold to Vagg Coaches of Knockin Heath, Shropshire (a colour photo of 394 with Vagg also appeared in EBM 687). Then, as a result of the major route changes on 19th of that month, 36 saloons became surplus to requirements; many L types plus all the surviving SCs (438-440, 445-448, 450-455) were delicensed. They never saw service with Eastern National again, despite them being included in the August 1964 renumbering scheme; given fleet numbers 1000-12 respectively, they did not survive long enough to carry them. Two survive in preservation, 427 (604 JPU) is under restoration by Chris Stewart and 455 (9579 F) is at the Cavan & Leitrim Railway in Ireland. Group member Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit also owns ex Lincolnshire 2485 (OVL 494), which returned to the road in Cornwall recently.

Below: An in-service shot of 446, 612 JPU, on service 231 which (with sister 232) ran from Pitsea railway station to Wantz Corner in



Runwell, via North Benfleet and Wickford, a service taken over with the business of Campbells of Pitsea in 1956, as revised in 1957. The bus is seen in Pitsea Broadway.

Frank Church

All the colour views on the following pages are my own, except 601 JPU which is from my collection. Since I did not start taking slides until 1964, my only colour views of ENOC SCs are after their sale, as featured here.

Thanks to Adam Kelleher for his most valued assistance with the production of this article.

SC afterlife

Seen in the yard of Vaggs Motors of Knockin Heath, Salop are 395/6 (724/5 APU) the two SC prototypes (SCX.001/2). Both vehicles were new to Eastern National in 1954, with ECW B35F bodywork. 395 was an SC4LK (Gardner 4LK), whilst 396 was an SC6P (Perkins P6). A Gardner engine was fitted in 1958. They were acquired by Vaggs in 1964.



424 (601 JPU) was one of six SCs that joined the Vaggs fleet, arriving in April 1964. It stayed for eight years. Vaggs operated a network of rural routes in Shropshire, several of which reached Oswestry, also served by Bristol SCs of Crosville Motor Services.

A.G. Osborne Collection



446 (612 JPU) spent part of its working life with EN working from Basildon on services which passed the Halfway House in Laindon. After withdrawal in June 1964 it found its way to another Halfway, a community to the south of Sheffield after acquisition by Booth & Fisher. This view was taken in August 1965 on an enthusiasts' tour.



The first Eastern National SCs to be withdrawn, in January 1964, were 435-7. All three quickly found new homes with Cumberland Motor Services of Whitehaven, one of these, 436 (606 JPU), becoming 210 in their fleet. It is seen outside Workington garage on a rather murky day in December 1966, with another SC in the background.



436 (606 JPU) was withdrawn by Cumberland in 1970, it then crossed the border and was acquired by Thomas, Upper Llandwrog (Silver Star) and is seen in Caernarfon Castle Square in 1972, still in Cumberland red and cream livery.



We are back in Caernarfon again in September 1978 and can now see 436 (606 JPU) nicely resplendent in Silver Star livery on service to Bontnewydd. It was taken out of service in February 1982 and then stored in a remote location in a ramshackle shed until 2001 when, following vandalism and a fire, the stored cherished vehicles were scrapped.



453 (9577 F) was one of several SCs that passed to K.W. Coaches, Daventry (acting as a dealer) in May 1964. Several vehicles were then sold on, but 453 entered the K.W. fleet as A56, and is seen in Banbury Bus Station in March 1967. It still retains Eastern National livery and thus provides a good illustration of its appearance when with EN, when it worked from Maldon.



455 (9579 F) was numerically the last SC in the Eastern National fleet, which was to have been re-numbered 1012 in August 1964, but was withdrawn three months previously. The new owner was Bee-Line of West Hartlepool (via K.W. Coaches, Daventry) one of three ex-EN SCs in their fleet used mainly on contract work. Withdrawn after a year, it passed to Smith (contractor) of Stockton-on-Tees, where it was caught on camera in October 1967 alongside some coaches in the Rennison fleet, it then moved on ...



455 (9579 F) was then sold in February 1968 to the Arlington dealership in Waltham Cross (almost back home!), but was soon on its way again across the sea to Ireland to Athlone in County Westmeath where it was registered with local mark ILI 98 and joined the fleet of N. Henry, trading as the Midland Bus Company. The view dates from August 1968. It was quite a surprise to see such a familiar vehicle in such an unlikely location! It remains in Ireland, at the Cavan & Leitrim Railway, Chris Stewart photographed it there in 2010. Its current status is not known.



Richard Delahoy adds a previously untold story behind EN's driver trainer Bristol SCs

In May 1969, Bristol SCs returned to the Eastern National fleet when two examples were acquired from Lincolnshire for use as Driver Training vehicles, becoming EN's 0649 & 0796. They lasted until March 1976. Their story has never been told fully before.

The acquisition was instigated in a letter dated 1st April 1969 from Mr R.F. Bushrod at EN to Mr R.G. Howe at LRCC, regarding the availability of two of the latter's SCs. The sale was agreed a few days later over the phone, at a price of £200 per vehicle, as this was the average price that LRCC had obtained for the last four vehicles sold. Duly transferred to Essex, the two SCs underwent conversion at Central Works before starting duties as trainer buses around November that year, initially allocated one each to Basildon and Braintree.

But this was not their first conversion.

First, the technical details:

NFW 649 was new to Lincolnshire as 2408 in 1956; it became EN 0649 (service vehicles were at that time numbered in an 0xxx OFW 796 was new to Lincolnshire as 2447 in 1957; it became EN 0796 series, with zeros in front of the registration digits).

Probably like most enthusiasts, I duly noted their existence but never questioned why they had *coach* fittings (doors, destination gear, seats) but the *bus* style front grille and frontal styling (see the picture of an Eastern Counties coach on page 27 for a comparison, although the Lincolnshire examples had a different version of the coach front as shown on the next page). I started doing some digging and unearthed a rather fascinating tale, with very grateful thanks to **Richard Belton** of the Lincolnshire Vintage Vehicle Society.

The two EN trainers were indeed built new as standard buses, with bus seats, folding jack-knife doors and bus style destination/three-track number blinds. Now Lincolnshire also had 16 coach versions of the SC, numbers 2601-16, new in 1957/8. In the late 1960s these were still in good condition, better than the bus examples and had only covered about half the mileage of the bus versions, so Lincolnshire's engineers devised a plan to convert them to buses. The conversion/rebuild was rather dramatic: the entire front dome, which on the coaches featured two small, equal sized destination boxes, was removed and swapped to bus examples. The doors were also swapped, exchanging the sliding coach door, with its recessed panel behind the door itself, for the folding doors and standard panel from the buses. The seats were also swapped over, easily the simplest part of the work.

It seems amazing that so much effort was put into these conversions, at considerable cost. Presumably that cost was justified by being able to offer the former buses for sale to other operators, rather than breaking them for scrap. And just to confuse enthusiasts, the ECW body number plates were fitted above the entrance doors, on a flap that could be opened to gain access to the entrance-door gear, and most remained in place when the doors etc were swapped to the coach versions - although this did help to identify the identities of most of the actual swaps.

Below: 0649 is seen in Braintree Bus Park in May 1970 in **Alan Osborne's** photo, who explains that it had been especially moved at his request, on an ENEG coach tour. A rare photo to have a Bristol KSW and two early Bristol VRs in the background!



The intention was to withdraw the buses (now with their coach accoutrements) after the conversions, but a few did see service as buses in their modified state. This included 2408, one of the pair that later came to EN. As Richard Belton explains: "After the exchange of body parts with coach 2601, which took place in June/July 1967, 2408 re-entered service (as a 33-seater) at Scunthorpe on 14th July 1967, and after final withdrawal from there on 30th September 1967, took on the role of the non-PSV Lincs Road Car Staff Bus at Bracebridge Heath Central Works, between 1st October 1967 and 31st December 1968.



"The sliding-door was almost certainly electrically operated after the conversions, as several of the DP batch were so-equipped in their later days, but originally (and certainly until the late 1960s on some of them), they were manually operated.

"Whilst out with my dad, I can remember sitting in the seat behind the door and shutting it again every time we pulled away from a junction, as the door slid back on its own, although it's hard to imagine the under-powered SC being capable of such a feat!"

Richard Belton's picture above of 2408 was taken in St Mark's Bus Station in Lincoln, possibly soon after the initial conversion.

The other one to pass to EN was 2447, which was de-licensed from Scunthorpe depot on 30th September 1968, and saw no further service until official withdrawal on 21 December 1968. It then exchanged parts with 2615 (RFU 693) in April/May 1969, so immediately prior to its sale to EN.

Having arrived in Essex, EN modified the interiors of both by building a partition across the saloon with a central door. The area behind was equipped as a classroom, with longitudinal seating, a cupboard, reversible blackboard/screen and a projector. The roof was painted cream, Lincolnshire having applied the bus livery of Tilling green with cream window surrounds, as seen in picture above. The interior of one is shown below, from **Ian Mahoney's** collection, via Chris Stewart.



The coaches now fitted out as buses continued in service with Lincolnshire and achieved quite decent lives, for example the pair that swapped their bits with the buses that came to EN were not withdrawn until late 1972/early 1973.

One of the Lincolnshire conversions survives in preservation - 2609, OFW 806, restored in coach livery and refitted with coach seats but retaining the bus style destination and door, so it is a bit of a hybrid, but restoring the coach features would be a massive undertaking involving fabricating the necessary parts. I caught up with it at an ECW event at the East Anglia Transport Museum on 9 July 2017 as seen at the top of the next page. A Lincolnshire bus example, never subjected to conversion, also survives - 2494, RFE 482, along with Tebzy's OVL 494 (2485).



Why did EN buy the SCs? At the time they did not have any surplus Bristol LS buses or coaches that might have made suitable trainers, indeed, a second-hand LS bus had to be bought from United Auto in 1969 (PHN 858, EN 1248) after an EN LS bus was withdrawn after an accident (1234, 856 ETW). In our November 1969 news-sheet we offered the explanation received from the company, that with relatively low power and 5-speed gearbox, the SCs were best suited for the initial training of drivers. It's not clear how long they were used for on the road training and assessments, despite the very prominent sign on the front. With a back-to-front gearbox layout, they could only have caused

unnecessary confusion for new recruits. No-one we asked could recall them being used other than as static classrooms and it may be that they saw very little actual use on the road. In their classroom role they were used to teach driving theory and also for conductor and OMO driver training.

On their withdrawal by EN in March 1976 they went to Sykes (dealer), almost inevitably for scrap. This despite interest elsewhere, as David Smith, who worked for EN at the time, recalls: "I remember one arriving at Silver End on trade plates and being parked in the scrap line along with some MWs. One of my colleagues, Graham Norfolk, was dead keen to buy it to convert to a caravan. Despite offering a cash bid it was declined, and NFW went off to the scrapyard very soon after".

To conclude our SC story, here is a coach version, seating 33. Eastern Counties had a fleet of ten of these of which LSC868 (6568 NG) is illustrated. Note how the radiator treatment differs from the Lincolnshire example above. The location is the Ipswich Turret Lane garage yard in May 1967. **Alan Osborne**



(Clacton) Memories of A Bus Lover

David Hawksworth
with help from Richard Delahoy

'Humped back' buses in Clacton? Surely not. But read on . . .

It's interesting how one thing can lead to another. Earlier this year, I (Richard D) received a letter from a gentleman in Bournemouth, David Hawksworth, explaining "In 1938/9 we lived in York Road at Holland-on-Sea. After what I recall as a dispute over whether our road was suitable for 'heavy buses', we had a regular summer service from Clacton, operated by a vehicle which we young children called 'The Hump Back Bus' and had a raised humped roof over the upper gangway", and going on to ask if I could identify it. As it happens, I thought I could.

The route would have been the 117, as shown here in the summer 1939 time-table book. I believe it started in May 1934, initially to Holland Sand Pits, being diverted to King's Cliff in July 1938, the road obviously having been deemed suitable for 'heavy buses'.

Service No. 117. MAGDALEN GREEN, CLACTON and HOLLAND-ON-SEA.									
(Via Clacton Railway Station and Marine Hotel.)									
Note.—This Service will commence on August 3rd, and operate Daily until September 13th, 1939, only.									
Daily.									
Magdalen Green..... dep.	a.m.	a.m.	...	...	...	p.m.	p.m.	Thro'	
Rush Green Corner, Coppins Rd. "	9 46	1016	...	...	...	1046	1116	Fare	
Clacton, Jackson Rd. Omn. Stn. "	9 52	1022	...	...	...	1052	1122	1d	
Clacton, L.N.E.R. Station..... "	9 58	1028	...	...	...	1058	1128	2d	
Valley Road Corner	10 0	1030	...	...	...	11 0	...	3d	
Holland-on-Sea, Roaring Donkey "	10 5	1035	...	...	...	11 5	...	4d	
Holland-on-Sea, King's Cliff ... arr.	10 8	1038	...	...	...	11 8	...	4d	
	1010	1040	...	...	...	1110	...	5d	
Holland-on-Sea, King's Cliff ... dep.	a.m.	a.m.	...	...	...	p.m.	p.m.	Thro'	
Holland-on-Sea, Roaring Donkey "	...	1022	1052	...	...	1052	1110	Fare	
Valley Road Corner	...	1024	1054	...	...	1054	1112	1d	
Clacton, L.N.E.R. Station..... "	...	1027	1057	...	...	1057	1115	1d	
Clacton, Jackson Rd. Omn. Stn. "	...	1032	11 2	...	...	11 2	1120	2d	
Rush Green Corner, Coppins Rd. "	9 34	10 4	...	...	...	11 4	1122	3d	
Magdalen Green..... arr.	9 40	1010	1040	1110	...	1110	...	4d	
	9 46	1016	1046	1116	...	1116	...	5d	
Note.—This Service is extended to operate to and from Grooms Orphanage on Tuesdays in connection with Fetes.									
For OTHER SERVICES between :									
Clacton—Holland-on-Sea, see Service No. 107, Clacton—Walton, via Holland-on-Sea; Magdalen Green—Clacton, Service No. 115, Magdalen Green—Jawick Sands; Service No. 115a, Holland-on-Sea—Jawick Sands; Service No. 116, Holland-on-Sea—Jawick Sands.									
WHEN IN CLACTON OR WALTON—									
You can wait in comfort for your Omnibus Services in the well-appointed Waiting Rooms provided at the "Eastern National" Omnibus Stations at Jackson Rd., Clacton; and High St., Walton.									
—“Always at your service”									

So what of the buses? From some research in the fleet history and looking at old photos (and with knowledge of one of this type, as explained below), I believe the buses were probably 2903 (VX 895) and 3213 (MY 2126), with possibly also 2902 (VW 9565) although the latter was recorded with The Borough Services fleet in Southend (Borough were owned by EN and merged fully in 1940) and might have been in south Essex at the relevant time. All three were AEC Regents with Shorts H26/24R0 bodies (i.e., with an outside staircase) new in 1929. Most EN double deckers were lowbridge types but we need highbridge (central gangway) buses to fit the humped back description.

2903 was withdrawn in 1939 after an accident and 3213, which had come to EN on the take-over of Silver Queen (the major Clacton area operator), in 1941, so both would still have been around at the time of David's youthful observations, and the timetable shows that the route needed two buses. But I'd welcome any other suggestions as to the identity of the buses used on the 117 immediately pre-World War II.

In our correspondence David opened "As a lifelong lover of buses I have, at the age of 92, decided to put my memories on paper. Partly in the form of mental exercise and also in the vague hope that someone will find it interesting". He shared his document with me and we are pleased to present it here, including those sections not directly relevant to Essex but hopefully of interest to our readership.

Memories of a bus lover

I have been fascinated by buses and coaches from a very early age. I do not have thousands of bus photos or albums. I have a small library of bus books and subscribe to *Classic Bus*. Some years ago, I had three-foot stack of *Buses Illustrated* but home downsizing meant they had to go. At the age of 92 I have a wealth of bus memories and I thought it would be a good mental exercise to collect these in one place and possibly share them with others.

One of my earliest childhood memories was in about 1935 when we lived in Rochford and a solid tyred double decker was tree cutting opposite our house. The group of older boys with which I associated decided that it would be a laugh if, while the crew were up top tree cutting, we put a brick under the rear offside wheel. As you can imagine, this caused much consternation among the crew when trying to get the bus to move, and much amusement to us lads viewing from behind the garden hedge.

In around 1938 we lived in Holland-on-Sea, a suburb of Clacton-on-Sea. I recall that there was much adult discussion opposing the proposal for Eastern National to run a double decker service up our road to the seafront. "These heavy vehicles will shake the houses to pieces" was the claim. However, it did run and I for one, was fascinated by what I called the 'Hump Top Buses', I think a Leyland of some description. Subsequent research has found that these were in fact an AEC chassis with a Shorts body.

[for details of the photo, see page 31]



In 1940 all residents were evacuated to three miles back from the coast due to fears of invasion. We went to stay with a friend in Mickleham, near Dorking in Surrey. Our local buses there were London Country green STL with a front entrance LT body; another vehicle I saw a lot of were the East Surrey Shorts LTs, which ran from Redhill and Reigate to Dorking. Sadly, I was never able to ride on one. When the Battle of Britain was raging in the Surrey skies my mother decided it would be better if we moved to a safer place and we went to Mansfield in Nottinghamshire. For me this was a bus lovers' dream. There were the green and cream AEC double deckers of Mansfield District, the royal blue AECs of Midland General and the light brown AECs of East Midland. The only variation of the AEC marque was a red double decker of the Ebor bus company which was either a Guy or a Foden. An abiding memory was of a Midland General single decker roaring up the Chesterfield Road after dark with showers of sparks coming out of the exhaust. It was wartime so the fuel could have been anything! A completely random memory of this time is of being taken on a bus in the midlands. It was a blue Leyland of Walsall which as it drew up, I saw that it said 'gearless' on the bonnet. To a thirteen-year-old this was something of a puzzle. How could a bus not have gears? (Later research suggests it was a Leyland TD3).

So, to Muswell Hill in North London in 1945. The services which passed the end of our road were the 134, Potters Bar to Pimlico and the 43, Friern Barnet to London Bridge. The buses used on the 134 were pre-war STLs, many with outside staircase. The 43 used the all-Leyland STDs. I felt that the STDs gave a much more robust ride than the AEC STLs. The other memory of this time was the 3-axle AEC Renown single deckers on the 212, Finsbury Park to Muswell Hill service. These agile vehicles roared up and down Muswell Hill with great frequency. It was local chat that, at that time, there were no double deckers in the fleet powerful enough for the climb. Not till the RT of course.

Passing through the Broadway was the route 102 to Golders Green which saw the introduction of the Daimler and Guy utility buses. Very basic body shapes and, on those which I experienced, wooden seats. Visits to central London at this time were to experience a huge variety of vehicles. There were versions of LTs, STs, STLs, STDs and for a young lad, trams and trolleybuses. A lasting memory is riding on the top deck of a tram through the Kingsway subway. A feature of the bus service at that time was 'The Workman's Bus'. Fares before (I think) 6am were much lower. And in those days smoking was allowed on the top deck. At that time in the morning the top deck was thick with smoke and echoed to the sound of heavy coughing! Another brief memory was that, in those days, the saloon floor was always littered with used tickets.

We returned to Holland-on-Sea in late 1945 and I travelled up to London to see my grandfather quite often and became a fan of Suttons Coaches, a Clacton company. Initially on AEC Qs and in 1946 as restrictions eased, they were allocated, by the Ministry of Transport, two Duple bodied Leyland Tiger PS1s. An AEC engine coach followed a bit later. This journey terminated at the King Cross Coach Station, a building in Belgrave St, across the road from the railway station, later to become a GPO Parcel depot. Later they moved to Judd Street. Right: Suttons LVX 680, Leyland PS1/Duple C33F at a later terminal in Pentonville Road. (EBEG collection)



While living in Holland-on-Sea I befriended one of the drivers of Barnes Coaches, another Clacton company and often went with him on the evening Mystery Tour for the holiday makers, in a Bedford SB, usually to Flatford Mill in Suffolk. Also, on a Saturday morning a stream of coaches bringing in the holiday makers. Names like Empires Best, Battens, Grey Green, Timpsons and many others I cannot recall but enjoyed watching arrive. Another memory was when I was at the Henry Ford Institute in Witham, an Eastern National bus was hired to take us to a sugar beet harvesting machine exhibition. The driver turned up very proudly with a brand new ECW bodied Bristol L5G. All was well until we went into the field to park and the uneven ground broke the lateral wooden rail that ran along below the bodywork. I don't know what it's called [dog rail] but I think it was to deter small boys! Anyway, the driver was absolutely heartbroken that he had damaged the lovely new bus.

In 1947 the family emigrated to Sydney in Australia. At this time Commonwealth Engineering was building bodies for the new AEC, Leyland and Albion chassis. Whether these were shipped out complete or locally assembled I never discovered. My own experience was the after-work journey from Wynyard Place to Lindfield on the 207 service. In those days there was no limit on the number of standing passengers allowed on the lower deck. Standing wasn't allowed on the top deck. This resulted in the practice of travelling provided that you could get your toes onto the platform and hold on to the rail! This loading meant that turning out of Wynyard Place into Margaret Street the rear of the bus could often scrape the road surface. Before loading, the conductor would stand right at the front of the saloon and once the bus was moving start taking the fares. He usually reached the back platform as we reached the far side of The Harbour Bridge in Crow's Nest. Usually, by this time, the passengers would have nudged up a bit and you would have both feet firmly on the platform. I couldn't leave the Australian memories without mentioning the Sydney Toast-rack trams, where the conductor, in hot sun or pouring rain, walked along the outside running board and leaned into every compartment to collect the fares.

When I returned to London in 1954 the RTs, RTLs and RTWs were everywhere. In the central area in red and the country area in green. In my area the single deck fleet consisted of the RF class. My memory of these is limited to the Green Line version. At this time I lived in Welwyn and was travelling overseas on business and the reliable RF was my link with the airport. When I did go to the office in Moorgate it was the Guy GS which took me to Welwyn North station and one of the last remaining trolleybus services from King's Cross to Moorgate, vehicles particularly memorable for their powerful acceleration away from stops. Nothing I have ridden on since has equalled it.

An abiding memory of the days before motorways was, every morning, seeing five or six black and white coaches streaming down Mardley Hill on the A1 on their way into London on the overnight services from Scotland [presumably Western SMT?]. Business visits to countries leave little time for buses. Though I do recall my surprise when in 1967 I visited Baghdad, to see a fleet of immaculate AEC Regent 5s with right hand side half cabs. And, in Sri Lanka, to see numerous ex London RTs running in a very dilapidated condition. For passenger/driver discipline there is no equal to that on the midi bus service in Bermuda. Here the driver will not move off before everyone is seated and no one will leave their seat before the bus stops. At the time of my visit to Santiago in Chile (around 1970) there were three levels of buses. Large very rattly buses with unlimited standing for the bottom range, American school bus type vehicles with limited standing for the middle range and smart minibuses with no standing for the top range. The fares were ranged accordingly.

Since 1970 I have lived and worked in Bournemouth and it is the first time that I have lived anywhere for longer than a few years. This has meant that I have had the opportunity to witness the way in which buses have developed; in particular, the tremendous improvements in passenger comfort. All the Bristol Ks and FLFs of Hants & Dorset and the Atlanteans and Fleetlines of Yellow Buses have been replaced with Morebus's fleet of Alexander Dennis Enviro 200s and 400s and the Volvos of Yellow Buses. Pavements have been raised and the buses can 'kneel' allowing entry on the flat. I still attend all the rallies and Running Days within the area and I find that getting on and off a Leyland PD1 (for example) requires two big steps up. Just as an aside, Yellow Buses were, I believe, the first company to order Atlanteans with flat floors in the saloon to cater for the ageing Bournemouth population. I will continue to enjoy watching the local vehicles and their development, I will go to as many running days and rallies as possible and go on enjoying reading *Classic Bus* magazine.

Before I end this trip down memory-lane I must mention my most recent and perhaps greatest memory. Back in 2020 David Squire, the Managing Director of Yellow Buses here in Bournemouth, became aware that I had always wanted to drive a double decker bus. He invited me to the Bournemouth depot and although it was during the Covid lockdown, cleared a space in the yard and I was able to drive a Volvo B7TL with Wright Body YBZ 949 (ex-Abellio London BX55 XNR) the full length of the yard and back again, twice. Of all the memories I have, that is the very best. [Sadly, the Yellow Buses business collapsed into insolvency in August 2022 and ceased operations].

These memories are described as best that I can recall. Some may have been slightly altered over the last 80 or so years. The identifying type names and numbers are, in the main, the result of research and/or subsequent experience. Over the period of this narrative the development of the Public Service Vehicles has been amazing. From wooden bodies with wooden seats on farm cart suspension to today's air suspension, air-conditioned upholstered comfort with internet connection, we really have come a long way. For the driver, from double de-clutching crash boxes through synchromesh and pre-selector to fully automatic gearboxes and from arm wrenching manual to finger light power steering.

David Hawksorth,
Bournemouth, April 2022.

And so back to Clacton and humped backs.

David outranks me by 25 years and yet I can also claim to have seen – and been inside – an Eastern National bus with that style of bodywork. We need to wind the clock back to 1976, when I was heavily involved with the Eastern National Preservation Group. I can't remember now how it came about, but I went with one or two others to look at two old bus bodies dumped on a site behind 110 St Johns Road in Clacton. What's more, one of them was the hump back ex-Borough example, 2902, although this contradicts the disposal in the PSV Circle Fleet History (see below).

We found two bodies connected by a home-made structure. The one on the left was a lowbridge Leyland Titan, 2788, contrasting with the highbridge bus on the right with its obvious hump over the gangway (as also illustrated in close up on page 29).



The style is very evident in this interior view. All these pictures were taken on 9 October 1976. **Richard Delahoy**

2902 had been new to EN in 1929, went to Borough in 1933 and then back to EN in 1936; it was renumbered 1141 in 1954 and withdrawn later that year. The Circle record it passing through various hands until "scrapped by Max Speed Transportation, Leytonstone, 1957". We identified it by the 2902 fleet number painted on the staircase. It also carried a National body number plate, NAT2296. In the early days of the industry, buses were often swapped from chassis to chassis as most chassis were of a common, straight framed design so could variously carry single deck, char-a-banc or double deck bodies (or lorries), meaning a form of identification of bodies was



needed, although by the late 1920s swapping had basically ceased as chassis design matured. The other bus had plate NAT2283 which I "liberated" and it remains in my collection today, identifying the bus as 2788 (TM 3751), a 1928 all-Leyland lowbridge bodied TD1, withdrawn in 1943. My defence was that I was ready to pass it on to a restorer of the body, but of course both were too far gone to consider saving and presumably were broken up at some stage. Left, a painted-on advert on 2902 for Long's Stores Ltd, Post Office Pitsea Broadway and Bull Road, Vange, recalls service with EN.

Rear cover: The Transition to Big Bus OMO

by Richard Delahoy, photos by Paul Bateson

The mid and late 1960s saw the industry move into the one-man operation (politically incorrect terminology today, but valid at the time) of larger buses, to reduce operating costs and address staff shortages. Not only were fewer staff required but those working OMO buses earned higher wages, improving retention (although the stress of combining the disparate tasks of driving and fare collection often induced greater stress, perhaps alleviated – eventually – by power steering and semi-automatic gearboxes). This pair of wonderful pictures by Paul Bateson capture that transitional period in the industry. They both feature Southend Transport operations:

Top: Southend had started regular one-man operation with the Albion Aberdonians in 1959/60 and followed those four buses (200/1/2/5) with a pair of 30' long Leyland Leopards (206/7) in 1961. All these seated only 43 or 45, so were not suitable as double deck replacements. Then in 1966 came a pair of 36' Leopards, 208/9, followed by five ex-Glasgow Leyland Royal Tiger Worldmasters. To complete the single deck fleet, four more 36' Leopards arrived in 1968, with 51-seat East Lincs bodies – thus, with standing, matching the capacity of a Leyland PD2 or similar. Paul then worked in the traffic office at Southend so knew when and where to find them, nicely capturing the last of the quartet, 218, at the Temple Sutton Schools terminus (Lewes Road) of the 17 on Friday 13 June 1969. Historically, 17 had been a Westcliff service from Pier Hill to Eastwood, but in April 1964 had been linked with the former 61B to provide a cross-town service as seen here. The driver has selected a passing point blind display that only shows the original western end of the route, there is a line above it reading 'Clunly Sq. Southend' that could have been used. The high steps, narrow entrance, manual gearbox and unassisted steering didn't make these the most popular buses either with drivers or passengers!

Lower: one-man operation of double deckers had been legalised from July 1966. Southend had obtained special dispensation from the Traffic Commissioner to use the Leyland Lowlanders in OMO mode - pay as you *leave* – as a temporary expedient during the 1967 strike and they were subsequently properly modified in 1969/70. Before committing to its largest ever vehicle purchase (of 26 Daimler Fleetlines, 33' long and dual doored) to hasten the widespread use of driver only buses, Southend tried a number of demonstrators, both Leyland Atlanteans and Daimler Fleetlines. Here Coventry 26 is in Rayleigh High Street, doing a three-point turn before returning to Southend via Hadleigh. Services 1, 7 & 8 terminated in the High Street then, not being extended down Crown Hill to Rayleigh Station until May 1969. Generally the 1 and 7 or 8 inter-worked here but the Fleetline was too high to pass under Hockley Station bridge so had to work back to Southend the way it came rather than continuing on via Hockley and Rochford, hence the convoluted turn round. It appears the crews swapped over buses to ensure they remained on the correct duty. To the right is 315, one of the half-dozen "Long Leylands" – lowbridge PD3s – which were regularly used on 7 & 8.

KWK 26F, with ECW body, was loaned by Transport Vehicles (Daimler) Ltd in November 1968, following a similar demonstration of West Bromwich 101, NEA 101F, in January of that year. One of the reasons for borrowing the Coventry bus was to test out the dual-door layout. It was given temporary number E11 whilst in Southend; Paul photographed it on Sunday 24 November.

Paul also reminds us that Atlantean demonstrator KTD 551C had similarly been tried out in OMO mode in June 1967. On the 21st of that month he travelled on it with driver Bryan Ashby to the remote Foulness terminus of the 18 to take this photo. Who would have thought then that the pair would be reunited by absolute chance 51 years later! As Paul explains "In April 2017 I took a repositioning cruise on The Caribbean Princess from Fort Lauderdale to Southampton. On board there was a game show called "Yes - No" where contestants had to answer questions without saying "yes or no" for two or three minutes. During the session I mentioned that I was Editor of *British Buses Abroad* and displayed a copy of the magazine, to much laughter from the audience. I succeeded and completed the session without uttering the dreaded words! When I left the stage, another passenger approached me and enquired, "Are you Paul Bateson?" A little surprised, I replied, "Yes, who wants to know?" The response was, "I am 143" which initially puzzled me. It was former SCT driver, Bryan Ashby, badge 143, who had recognised me. How amazing and we spent the rest of the cruise reminiscing about our days at SCT.



What's in a Name?

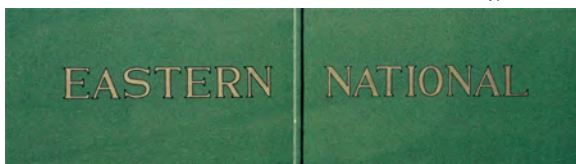
by Richard Delahoy

How often do we take the trouble to record on film the detail of operator fleetnames and logos? Thankfully, in the 1950s/1960s our member **Frank Church** did exactly that and here we present a selection, starting with Eastern National.

The colour reproduction varies somewhat from slide to slide, a reflection of the variable film quality at the time. We've made some adjustments but have not attempted to standardise them all, and anyone who took colour slides of vehicles in Tilling green will know how the shade seemed to vary over time, not least as the paint weathered, but also due to the sensitivity of the film emulsion and the lighting conditions when the photo was taken. In a subsequent issue we'll feature some other Essex operators.



From the 1930s until 1958, EN used equal height block capitals, as seen in these shots. Left, 1348, a 1950 Bristol KS, right, an unidentified Bristol LS saloon. Below, another double deck, probably another K type.



The more familiar underlined style is illustrated by an early LD model Lodekka, 1436, right, and below that, on a later FLF model with cream window rubbers.

But the equal height block capitals made a comeback in a modern, slanting form on coaches, like this unidentified Bristol MW below.



In the final years before the imposition of the NBC corporate livery and fleetnames, the coach style name was used on a variety of buses, here (below) looking rather lost on the cream band of a Bristol RELL saloon. It also briefly featured on the radiator cowl of some Lodekkas, inviting some unofficial modification on Bristol FS 2538 in my shot at Southend – Faster National indeed! Some MW buses also gained this style on the front panels but split over two lines and one (1431) even had the underlined style split into two on its front.



Finally, my collection includes this example of the actual transfer used, 37.25" (945 mm) long, acquired many years ago now!

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