

ESSEX BUS NEWS

**No. 565
May 2011**



ESSEX BUS ENTHUSIASTS GROUP
www.essexbus.org.uk



Ensignbus began running Thurrock contracted services 373/374 from April 4. Four ex Metrolink MPD Darts have been bought for the purpose although Marshall-bodied 721 (R621VEG) was working on May 5 when photographed outside The Bell in Horndon-on-the-Hill on the 373. *Chris Stewart* One of the MPDs, Y256 NLK, now Ensignbus 656 was caught in Grays on the 374 two days later. *Russell Young*



Essex Bus News

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Eastern National Enthusiasts Guild

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Your reports and observations

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

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

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

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

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Dates for your diary

■ EBN PRESS DATES

EBN dated

June

July

reports to Editors by

May 28

July 2

Despatch day is posted to the website as soon as it is known. Please allow reasonable time for postal delays (at least seven working days) before claiming non-receipt. Replacements can be obtained from the Distribution Secretary (see Group Directory).

■ SOUTH ESSEX EVENTS

- ▶ **Tuesday June 28 - evening visit to Ensign Bus;** visit will pick up in Lakeside Bus Station at 1900 and at Chafford Hundred Station at 1910 (connecting with the 1908 arrival from London). Participants should join at one of these two locations, NOT at Ensign's depot.

Cover:

Horse-drawn carriages and vintage Aston-Martin DB6's are all very well for Royal weddings but for the more discerning couples, a Bristol FLF is hard to beat. No.7 in the fleet of **Dreadnought Coaches** of Alnwick, Northumbria, is the magnificent, former Eastern National 2841 (MVX 878C). See EBN 556 for an article on Dreadnought Coaches by Richard Delahoy.

Steven Hodgson, courtesy of Keith Lee

- ▶ **Monday July 25 - evening visit to the Castle Point Transport Museum**, arrive there from 1900 onwards. We hope to have a short ride in a museum bus during the evening, subject to availability.
- ▶ Note that there is no South Essex meeting in August. The autumn season will then recommence at our usual Wickford venue on Monday September 26, then Mondays October 24, November 28 and December 19 - details to be advised nearer to the dates.

Richard Delahoy

■ NORTH ESSEX MEETINGS

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

2011 programme ~ slide shows

- ▶ **Friday June 10** - slide show by Steven Hughes
- ▶ **Friday July 8** - slide show by Paul Smith
- ▶ **Friday August 12** - slide show by Dave Arnold
- ▶ **Friday September 9** - slide show by Gary Sharpe
- ▶ **Friday October 14** - *see it, buy it!* Slides from the Group's sales stock will be shown by Owen Woodliffe – if you like one, buy it there and then!
- ▶ **Friday November 11** - slide show by Trevor Brookes
- ▶ **Friday December 9** - Xmas social & slide show by Gary Sharpe & Dave Arnold

■ TOURS

Inadvertently omitted from April EBN

- ▶ **Saturday May 28: North Essex & Suffolk Tour.** Departs Colchester North Station at 0900 sharp, using Talisman's DAF coach, we will visit Carters, Beestons, Sudbury (lunch stop in town centre and Hedingham depot), Turners and Florida, with a final surprise visit. Fare £15. To book: send your details, a cheque for £15 payable to EBEG and an SAE for booking confirmation, to: **Keith Woods, 34 Normandie Way, Bures, Suffolk, CO8 5BE.**
- ▶ **Wednesday June 22:** Evening visit to Talisman Coachlines. Pick up at North Station 19.00; fare £5; phone 01621 857509 to book.

■ EVENTS ETC

- ▶ **Friday/Saturday May 27-28:** London Transport Museum, Guided Tours: Acton Depot.
- ▶ **Saturday June 4:** LT Country Bus Rally, Stevenage route re-enactment day.
- ▶ **Sunday June 5:** LT Country Bus Rally, Hertford & Stevenage.
- ▶ **Sunday June 5:** Family Fun Day, Ipswich Transport Museum, Suffolk.
- ▶ **Sunday June 5:** Clacton Vintage Bus Display & Running Day, Clacton Factory Outlet.
- ▶ **Sunday June 12:** 100 Years of the Trolleybus, East Anglia Transport Museum.
- ▶ **Friday/Saturday June 24-25:** London Transport Museum, Guided Tours: Acton Depot.
- ▶ **Saturday June 25:** Ipswich Transport & Model Festival, Ipswich Transport Museum
- ▶ **Sunday June 26:** Bus & Coach Event, East Anglia Transport Museum, Carlton Colville.
- ▶ **Sunday July 3:** North Weald Bus Rally, North Weald airfield. Bus services from Epping and Ongar.
- ▶ **Sunday July 3:** North Norfolk Railway Vintage Transport Day. Free Vintage Buses Holt-Weybourne-Sheringham, and display at Holt Station (A148). All buses welcome!
- ▶ **Sunday July 24:** Colne Valley Railway Vehicle Rally, Castle Hedingham, Essex. All vehicles welcome.
- ▶ **Friday/Saturday July 29-30:** London Transport Museum, Guided Tours: Acton Depot.

- **Sunday July 31: Classic & Vintage Bus Day**, Cambridge Museum of Technology, Cheddars Lane, Cambridge.

Information is published in good faith and members are strongly advised to check details with the organisers, as the Group can accept no liability if events are cancelled or altered.

Membership Changes

Welcome to new member:

Mark Alderton of Colchester - 1028

Richard Delahoy

Brian Smith

We are very sorry to have to report the death of former group member Brian Smith, who passed away at the end of April, following a series of strokes suffered since 2007. Brian will be best remembered as one of the partners, along with Bill May, in Hadleigh based S&M Coaches. Bill continues to run Linkfast Ltd, now based at Sadlers Farm, Bowers Gifford.

The S&M fleet was an enthusiasts mecca particularly in the 1970s and 1980s when many second-hand double deckers were used on schools contracts but they also ran modern coaches such as EHJ 76T, based on the Leyland Leopard chassis of MED 270F that was updated in S&M's workshops and rebodied by Plaxton in 1979. Richard Delahoy's picture taken on Madeira Drive in Brighton on April 21, 1979 shows Brian rushing up to take his seat for the driving tests at that year's British Coach Rally. Behind is a second S&M entry, Bristol RELH JNK 561N, also Plaxton bodied. Brian will be remembered as an unfailingly courteous man with a great love of the bus and coach industry.



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group 46th AGM - 28 March 2011

15 members and four committee members attended the recent AGM at Wickford.

Copies of the minutes and Group Accounts can be sent electronically by application to the Chairman (shenfield252@gmail.com) or by post on request from the Secretary, Alan Osborne.

There are a few matters which should be drawn to your attention:

The existing officers and committee members (Chris Stewart, Chairman; Alan Osborne, Secretary; Richard Delahoy, Treasurer; Owen Woodliffe, Ian Ransom and David Harman) were re-elected together with Keith Woods. Keith will be taking on Ian Ransom's duties as Tours Organiser; we look forward to your support and thank Ian for his previous work on tours.

The draft constitution circulated in EBN562 was adopted with one amendment, namely that the figure for a quorum at an AGM was changed to 15. It is not intended to re-issue this to existing members but a copy will be placed on the Group's website, new members will be supplied with one and any member wishing to have a printed copy may obtain one from the Secretary.

Grateful thanks were expressed from the floor to David Harman for his work with EBN, Owen Woodliffe for taking on its distribution, Bill Morrison for enabling the continued use of Wickford Cricket Club by South Essex meetings and to the committee as a whole for their work during the year.

*Chris Stewart
Chairman*

Books etc. For Sale

The Group has a number of old books and ephemera for sale as listed below, from the collection of our late member Frank Church. A number of titles are rarely to be found on sale these days, and we only have one copy of each, so sales will be on a first come, first served basis. Therefore to check availability, in the first instance please contact **Richard Delahoy - Richard@signal-training.com** or write to **272 Shobury Road, Southend on Sea, SS1 3TT** (with an SAE for reply) – he will then confirm availability and postage costs.

Buses in Basildon

Omnibus Society booklet, 1970, 185mm x 245mm size, 12 pages, good condition, cover slightly faded £3.

The National Way – Silver Jubilee of Eastern National 1955

Donald MacGregor's "short illustrated history of EN & predecessors", 1955, 185mmx245mm size, 38 pages, good condition £6

Eastern National Golden Jubilee 1930-1980

Folder of reproduction leaflets, issued by the company, good condition, includes a few other sundry leaflets incl "EN - Part of the Chelmsford Scene for 60 years" £2

Eastern National Past & Present, D G Bell

64 page photo collection, 185mm x 245mm size, mostly 2 pictures to a page, 1982, good condition, £5

Eastern Counties Past & Present, D G Bell

64 page photo collection, 185mm x 245mm size, mostly 2 pictures to a page, 1981 fair condition, faded cover edges, £5

Eastern National 50 years of service 1930-1980

Company book published 1980, 32 pages, A4 size, fair condition, faded cover edges £3.

Eastern National 60 years of service 1930-1990

Company book published 1990, 44 pages, A4 size, good condition £4.

Eastern National in Focus (Volume 1)

Derek Stebbing's 1986 photo collection, 185mm x 245mm size, 26 pages, mostly two or three pictures to a page, good condition £3.

Eastern National Fleet History Part 1 1930-1954 & Part 2 1954-1965 (being sold together) The PSV Circle/Omnibus Society original comprehensive fleet history, 8"x10", vol.1 85 pages, vol. 2 76 pages, excellent condition but staples rusted – being sold together for £10.

Eastern National Map of Omnibus and Coach Services

January 1961 issue, folded down to 14cm x 8cm, good condition, the usual stand-alone system map of the 1950s & 1960s £1.

Eastern National Map of Routes

Removed from inside the rear cover of a timetable, undated but looks to be mid 1950s £1.

Southend Transport Bus & Coach Timetable

October 2, 1988 edition, A6 size, excellent condition £2.

Group Directory

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

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

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

Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road
Southend-on-Sea SS1 3TT
richard@signal-training.com

MISSING / DEFECTIVE EBNs

For replacements, contact the Distribution Officer:

Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road,
Chingford, London E4 8PT
pat_woodliffe@hotmail.com

TIMETABLE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Join this scheme to receive the Essex County

Council timetable book and bus map. Send

your details and a cheque for £12 to
Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road,
Southend on Sea SS1 3TT.

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

PUBLICATION SALES

Send orders for publications to:
Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road,
Chingford, London E4 8PT

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

BLACK & WHITE PHOTO SALES

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

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

lynw@barrons-bds.com

Publicity News

Recent items of publicity include

First – Corporate style leaflets for 70 dated 6.3.11 and 71/A/C dated 6.3.11 and Corporate multifold timetables/map for 40/50 dated 9.1.11 and revised edition dated 4.4.11; 41/A/51 dated 9.1.11 and revised edition dated 4.4.11; 45 dated 4.4.11; 47/A dated 9.1.11 and revised edition for 47 dated 4.4.11; 54/55/56 dated 9.1.11 and revised edition dated 6.3.11 and 65 dated 6.2.11.

First – Braintree area bus guide a 32 page booklet with timetables and a route diagram dated 4.4.11.

Airport by Coach leaflets for Stansted Airport from Ipswich dated 9.1.11 and X22 also dated 9.1.11.

Essex County Council leaflets for services 14/15/15A dated 1.5.11; 898 (Blackmore-Romford) dated 3.5.11.

An unusual offering from **Essex County Council** is a leaflet for The Hylands Bus dated 11.4.11. This free service runs on 11.4; 09.05; 13.06; 11.07; 08.08; 12.09 and is for the use of The Friends of Hylands House only. Three return journeys are offered

Ian Ransom with thanks to Chris Stewart

Service changes

Arriva East Herts & Essex

13 Jun 11	333	M-S	Harlow to Thorley Park: service withdrawn.
	505	M-S	Harlow to Chingford: revised route and timetable.

Brentwood Community Transport

3 May 11	898	M-S	Blackmore to Romford Queens Hospital: new service
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Centrebus

3 Apr 11	392	M-S	Hertford to Harlow: service withdrawn (updated information).
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Colchester Community Voluntary Services

23 May 11	SB32	M	Eight Ash Green to Tollgate: new service.
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Community Link

8 Apr 11	845	Su	Loughton to Chingford via Epping Forest: new service.
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First

1 May 11	100	D	Lakeside to Chelmsford: minor revisions to three journeys from 0830 departing Lakeside Monday to Friday.
5 Jun 11	100	D	Lakeside to Chelmsford: revision to timetable.
6 Jun 11	75A	M-F	Colchester to Colchester Zoo: new summer service.

Gemma Smith (Lea Valley Buses)

16 May 11	555	M-S	Harlow to Loughton: revised route and timetable.
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Hedingham Omnibuses

1 Jun 11	95	M-F	Maldon to Tollesbury: revision to timetable
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Olympian Coaches

23 May 11	741	M-F	Bishop Stortford to London: revised route and timetable.
	741A	M-F	Bishop Stortford to Harlow: new service.

National Express

16 May 11	481	D	Felixstowe to London: minor timetable changes.
	484	D	Walton to London: minor timetable changes.
	727	D	Norwich to Brighton: Brighton bound journeys to serve Heathrow Terminal 4.
	767	D	Stansted Airport to Nottingham: minor timetable changes.
	777	D	Stansted Airport to Birmingham: minor timetable changes.
	797	D	Cambridge to Brighton: Brighton bound journeys to serve Heathrow Terminal 4

NIBS

11 Apr 11	225	M-F	Wickford to Shotgate via Beauchamps: new service.
17 Jun 11	237	M-S	South Woodham to Basildon: revision to timetable.

Roadrunner

13 Jun 11	392	M-S	Harlow to Hertford: service withdrawn
	14	M-F	Staple Tye to Templefields: service withdrawn.

SM Coaches

6 Jun 11	323	M-F	Harlow Circular: new service.
	381	M-F	Ongar to Harlow: new service.

TGM Group(Network Harlow)

13 Jun 11	1/A	M-S	Harlow to Katherines Circular: revised route and timetable.
	2/3	M-S	Harlow to Staple Tye Circular: revised route and timetable
	4	M-S	Harlow to Latton Bush Circular: revision to timetable.
	5	M-S	Harlow to Sumners Farm Circular: new service
	6	M-S	Harlow to Brays Grove Circular: revised route and timetable.
	7	M-S	Old Harlow to Sumners Circular: revised route and timetable.
	8	M-S	Harlow to Old Harlow Circular: revised route and timetable.
	10	M-S	Harlow to Church Langley Circular: revision to timetable.

Paul Harvey
with acknowledgements to LOTS, Essex & Hertfordshire County Council,
Richard Delahoy, Harlowride & First

■ FIRST ESSEX BUSES LTD

Management changes

With effect from 1st May, the existing operating company board structures have been replaced by a Regional Board headed by MD (South East and Midlands, UK Bus) Nigel Barrett. Day to day operations are in the hands of local General Managers, those covering Essex being Chris McCormick (BN/HH), Bob Taylor (CF/BE) and Cliff Hussey (CR/CN/DT plus Ipswich). The region now stretches as far as Worcester and Newcastle-under-Lyme with Mick Branigan as Regional Engineering Director and Steve Wickers as Regional Commercial Director. Phil Pannell has been appointed Engineering Projects and Standards Director for the region while Alan Pilbeam, formerly MD First East England, is leaving the region in June.

We at EBN would like to thank Alan for his assistance during his relatively short stay in Essex and to wish him well for the future.

As another old established dividing line between companies disappears, EBN will continue to report the operations of First Essex Buses Ltd together with related information from First Eastern Counties Ltd (both of which use the *First in East England* name for marketing and share some administration). This column will also now include anything relevant to Essex from the South East and Midlands region, particularly as some of the traditional distinctions become more difficult to draw. In passing, it is interesting to note from a historical viewpoint to note that Luton (where *First* operate airport connections) is now part of the same region as the erstwhile Eastern National, having been transferred to United Counties in 1952 – although the former EN operations are with other companies and there is no direct link.

New/acquired vehicles

The remaining Volvo/Wright for Chelmsford Park & Ride are 69518/20 (BJ11ECT/W), first licenced 28.3.11 and 8.4.11 respectively. The Sandon P&R remained exclusively in the hands of Scania 65028-32 until 16th April, after which new Volvos were in use almost exclusively although 65030 was in use on 3rd May.

From First Eastern Counties Ltd (all originally First Manchester):

60809	S660RNA	Volvo B10BLE	YV3RA514WA00432	Wright B41F	A269 new	1.10.98
60810	S661RNA	Volvo B10BLE	YV3RA515WA00433	Wright B41F	A270 new	1.10.98
60811	S662RNA	Volvo B10BLE	YV3RA513WA04485	Wright B41F	A271 new	1.10.98
60863	R641CVR	Volvo B10BLE	YV3RA516WA04318	Wright B41F	A242 new	12.6.98
60864	R642CVR	Volvo B10BLE	YV3RA514WA04320	Wright B41F	A243 new	19.6.98
60865	R643CVR	Volvo B10BLE	YV3RA512WA04316	Wright B41F	A263 new	24.6.98

With reference to EBN564, Darts 42436 and 46440 were transferred to First Essex on 28th March and 43445/8 on 2nd April. The Scania listed above moved from Great Yarmouth (60865) or Norwich on 10th April.

46440 is B36F and was first licenced 1st April 1996.

Allocation changes

End of Period 1 (four weeks commencing 27th March 2011)

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

FEC=First Eastern Counties; FGC=First Group cascade, i.e. transfer to/from any other First fleet; RES=reserve (spare/retained, licensed); D/L(S)=spare/retained (delicensed); D/L(D)=delicensed for disposal; DS=Driving School; PH=Private Hire; PS=Paint Spare
20351 RES-FGC; 20352 RES-FEC; 20353 RES-FGC; 41730 BN-HH; 41732 BN-HH; 41735 BN-

HH; 42436 FEC-BN; 43445 FEC-BN; 43448 FEC-BN; 43736 BN-HH; 46182 CN-sold; 46440 FEC-BN; 46828 D/L(D)-sold; 47101 D/L(D)-sold; 56005 RES-FGC; 56006 RES-FGC; 56009 RES-FGC; 60104 BN-D/L(S); 60809 FEC-BN; 60810 FEC-BN; 60811 FEC-BN; 60863 FEC-BN; 60864 FEC-BN; 60865 FEC-BN; 65690 BE-CF; 65691 BE-CF; 65692 BE-CF; 66828 CF-BE; 66829 CF-BE; 66830 CF-BE; 67002 BN-D/L(S); 67013 BN-D/L(S)

In practice, 65690-2 spent much of their time at CF prior to this exchange on 10th April, as Braintree were not holding Scania spares.

Disposals:

20351/3 to *First Aberdeen* (12th April, not as given in EBN564) – taken to Luton by First Essex drivers for onward collection.

20352 to *First Eastern Counties* at King's Lynn (18th April), covering accident repairs to Volvo B9 double decker 37577.

56005/6/9 to *First Scotland East* (10th April)

To Erith Commercials (scrap): 46828, 47101 (5th April), 46182 (12th April)

Repaints/Adverts:

34285 has gained side and rear contravision advertisement for Digital TV switchover.

65028 repainted to fleet livery (ex P&R black) by 20th April

62406, 65685 to super rear adverts for Weston Business Centres (meeting rooms).

65673/8 to super rear adverts for Weston Business Centres (office).

66837 to super rear advert for SVC Recruitment.

Other changes:

43678, 67009 to LED destination displays



TV News

First Essex 34285 (P85 TGD) is another contravision horror, here advertising the Digital TV switchover. For those viewing this EBN in black & white, the 'Transit van' with oversized wheels is in a strident shade of pink which seems to be a favourite among contravision customers. Colchester, 21 April. *Steven Hughes*

Area News - workings and sightings

Pointers and Dashes – Step entrance Darts

Clacton was reduced to one step Dart (46183) after 28th March when 46182 was withdrawn with a defective steering box and 47223's MOT expired, but the latter was back in use at Chelmsford by 4th May. Meanwhile 46183 was reported moving from CN to BN on 7th May. CF also had 46158 throughout April (noted working 51 on 6th April, 36 on 14th, 48 on 21st and 71A on 26th) and step Darts continued to work on the 351 (46827 on 13th, 46185 on 16th) and 551 (46153 on 9th, 46153/85 and 46827 on 14th). BN's 46153 worked Brentwood 73/73A on 18th while the 25 saw 46151 on 6th April and 46827 on 5th May. Unusually both 46151 and 46185 operated the 100 on 9th April.

Hadleigh examples continuing in service into May were 46145/69/77 (all on service 20, seen on 5th) of which 46177 had worked service 26 on 12th April and the 10.00 service 21 ex Canvey on 27th. None of these were expected to last very long, however, while at BN 46151/2 were taken out of use for disposal on 7th May.

Lance Watch

The Dennis Lance fleet has seen its first examples which had been new to Eastern National taken out of service, with 67002/13 (along with ex PMT 60104) taken to Braintree 'old' yard for storage by 16th April. They were joined, incidentally, by Yellow School Bus publicity unit 68000 (which has never seen use with *First Essex*).

On 6th and 13th April, 67001 was on service 100 while 67012 was serving as a driver shuttle to Brentwood on 18th. Chelmsford's examples were still to be found largely on the 71 (although joined by Scania 65028 after repaint) but on 23rd 60102 worked the 42A and 67010 the 36. to South Woodham. On the same day, Colchester's 67005 operated the 12.00 and 15.00 service 75 to Maldon and then the 17.40 Halstead 88A. On 27th, it worked 64s most of the day and was on the more usual 67/67A with 67003/4 on 28th. 67005 gained a new destination blind and 67009 (with LED display) went on loan to Harwich by 30th April. 67011 had been placed in store at BE by 30th April and 67004 was taken to Clacton disposal yard on 6th May.

Olympians

Chelmsford's 34286 was back in service by 26th April, working the 42 on this day and 28th but on loan to Braintree for the 132 on 27th. On 3rd May it worked the 42 (being replaced by Volvo CF66794) and then the 17.15 48X and 17.55 36 to South Woodham. BE34613 worked the 132 on 16th, 21st & 30th April and the 30 on 4th May. BE34302 operated the 132 on 28th. CF34355 worked a short 42A to Warner's Farm on 4th April while the following day saw BE34301 on the 42. 34355 operated the 42 again on 13th and Colchester 71 on 21st. CF34284 spent the afternoon of 4th May working the 42

Unusual Colchester Olympian workings reported during April were:

Ser 62 – 34056 (showing 75)

Ser 64/64A – 34315 on 14th, 34309 on 16th

Ser 65 – 34013 on 18th, 34014 on 19th and 34285 on 20th

Ser 67 – 34290 on 15th

Ser 68 – 34308 on 4th, 34013 on 13th

Clacton (CN) & Harwich (DT)

Member Robert Appleton has again kindly sent a report from a visit on 15th April. He noted all the early morning service 103/104 journeys (being a school holiday period, the Harwich - Manningtree school contract and ser 193 Ardleigh - East Bergholt were not operating):

06.00 Harwich - Colchester 104, 07.15 Colchester - Harwich 104: CN32852 (T852LLC)

07.10 Harwich - Colchester 104, 08.35 Colchester - Harwich 104: DT32801 (T801LLC)

07.30 Harwich - Colchester 103, 09.05 Colchester - Harwich 103: CN32854 (T854KLF)

08.57 Mistley - Colchester 103, 09.35 Colchester - Harwich 104: CR60756 (N421MWY)



First Essex 43448 (P448 WEX), another gift from Eastern Counties - now running from Basildon. Seen in verdant surroundings at Lakeside on May 7. *Russell Young*

08.50 Harwich - Colchester 104, 10.05 Colchester - Harwich 103: CN32852 (T852LLC)
 09.20 Harwich - Colchester 103, 10.35 Colchester - Harwich 104: DT32809 (T809LLC)
 09.50 Harwich - Colchester 104, 11.05 Colchester - Harwich 103: DT32818 (T818LLC)
 10.20 Harwich - Colchester 103, 11.35 Colchester - Harwich 104: DT32801 (T801LLC)
 10.50 Harwich - Colchester 104, 12.05 Colchester - Harwich 103: CN32854 (T854KLF).

There is one journey on service 103 which is not low floor. CR continue to work 09.50 Mistley - Colchester 103, usually with a Volvo Olympian, and this was CR34290 (P191TGD).

At 10.45 DT32804 (T804LLC) was parked outside the depot but DT44518/9 were not seen [most likely away for MOT - Ed.]

DT44516 (YX09ACV) worked 09.40 Harwich - Clacton Villagelink service 4 and DT44517 (YX09ACX) worked 10.40 Harwich - Clacton Villagelink service 3.
 DT42937 (SN05DZT) was working on Harwich - Parkeston circulars 20/20A and CN43743 (V743GPU) was working on Harwich - Long Meadows - Parkeston circulars 22A/22B.

April

12th CN41678 on 76, CN46183 on 7
 14th CN57002 on 74
 20th CN43744 seen in CR depot
 23rd CR65522 on CN74
 27th Routemaster 39480 in DT depot, CN32852/4 and CN43743 on loan. DT32801/10 at BN for MOT, DT32847/9 at CN for engine repairs. [32852/4 were in act on loan for all of April]. CR61057, also on loan to DT, suffered accident damage on 27th whilst working the 103.

At Clacton, Scania 65538 was out of use all of April awaiting and then undergoing fire

damage repair. Primos 57001/2 have been regularly operating services 10/11/12 since the 3rd April service revisions. Service 13 is normally operated by 437xx darts, this car line being interworked with services 7/8 and 16.35 service 74/19.00 service 74B. Scania 62407 still operating from Clacton, mostly on services 17/17A/18, although it has had occasional runs to Colchester.

Colchester (CR)

Since the new Sainsbury's at Tollgate, Colchester opened in November 2010, Highwoods bound 65s now wait at B1408 London Road (outside the new store) rather than on Tollgate West. The route at Tollgate has also been revised, with 65s running as a loop around Tollgate West, London Road and Tollgate Road.

26th/27th March: Godmans Lane, Marks Tey, closed at junction with A120 Coggeshall Road for gas works. 70 was not serving Ashburys Drive or Godmans Lane and running via Coggeshall Road.

28th-31st March: Road works at Gore Pit Corner, Feering caused significant disruption to 71/A.

30th March and 2nd April: Disruption/suspension to 71/A due to accidents on A12.

4th-8th April: Halstead Road, Colchester closed between London Road and Mellor Chase for ground works. Halstead bound 88s, Great Yeldham bound 88As were diverted via London Road and King Coel Road.

21st April: East Gates level crossing barriers in Colchester became stuck in the "down" position causing disruption to 74, 76 and 103/4. Network Rail operated the crossing manually until repairs were completed.

April

- 6th CN43744 on CR71C
- 7th DT42937 on CR65
- 12th CN32850 on 17.15 CR-MN 75 for evaluation
- 16th CR65653 on 1 - usually Solar
- 17th CN32854 stabled at CR
- 18th CR65654 on 71C (usually Solar)
- 21st CR65651 on 71C (usually Solar)

Chelmsford (CF) and Braintree (BE)

Following the service changes of 4th April, member Richard Wansbury spent part of that morning observing vehicle workings at Chelmsford Bus Station:

53127 on 11.33 ser 50 to Great Baddow and 53132 on 12.03 suggested that the withdrawal of ser 40 at this time of day had taken place a week earlier than advertised. Step Dart 46158 worked the 11.51 ser 51 to Chignall Estate and 42482 the 11.54 to Galleywood. The 47 at 11.35 was 42923 and the 48 at 11.50 to Broomfield Hospital (via Chelmer Village) was Solo 53133.

Other vehicles noted were 42934 on 11.26 ser 42 to Galleywood, 65688 on 11.40 ser 71 to Colchester, 42930 on 11.40 ser 42 to Warner's Farm and 65626 on 12.00 ser 100 to Lakeside.

April

- 1st CF66797 on BE70
- 2nd CF66798 on BE70, CF66808 on BE132
- 3rd CR62406 on CF71/71A all day
- 5th CF53131 on BE509, CF66797 on BE70
- 6th BE65691 on CF42, CF66798 on BE70
- 7th CF66797/9, 66818 on BE70
- 8th CF53125 on 132; CF66837 on BE70 (and 21st)
- 13th CF53132 on 31, BE65691 on 42
- 14th BE43358 on 47
- 15th CF66799 on BE70 (and 18th)
- 19th CF66799, 66807/8 on BE70
- 22nd CF66794 on X30
- 24th BE43801 on 352

26th CF53138 on 70
27th CF65692 on 42A
28th BE66828 on 21

Basildon (BN) & Hadleigh (HH)

April

12th BN60810/63 on 100, 60810/1/65 on 25 (first reported sightings)
13th BN46440 on 100 (and 14th)
26th HH32883 on 21

May

3rd HH41762 on 27
5th BN43848 on 351

Other news

Volvo/Plaxton 20102 (N602APU) was loaned to Lowestoft and was seen on service X1 (covering Volvo B9 warranty work) on 19th April. It was at Ipswich by 26th. Volvo B10B driving trainer 60117 spent the latter half of April at Ipswich but had gone by 3rd May, replaced by 60319. FEC Volvo trainer 20122 (P732 NVG) from Ipswich was at Chelmsford (Westway) during late April for mechanical repairs.



First Essex Volvo B10B/Wright driving trainer 60319 (N524 WVR), normally allocated to Chelmsford, is seen at First Eastern Counties, Ipswich on May 6. *Jim Long*

Sources: Own observations, with many thanks to *First Essex* and to S Austin, A Bird, N Clark, T Clark, J Collins, D Edwards, M Farmer, D Flatman, J Long, K Mead, J Podgorski, D Pretty, I Ransom, J Salmon, 'Solo', TBL177M, R Wansbury, R West, the *Essex and East Anglia* yahoo! groups, *Essex and East Anglia* Google groups, www.bustlistsontheweb.co.uk, *Real Bus News*, LOTS, PSV Circle and 'Terminus'.

Reports relating to First Group may be sent by text on 07973 509459, by e-mail to shenfield252@gmail.com or by conventional post. Many thanks to all who do so.

Chris Stewart

Lance Watch

The last full size buses delivered to what was then Eastern National were Northern Counties bodied Dennis Lances 1501-13

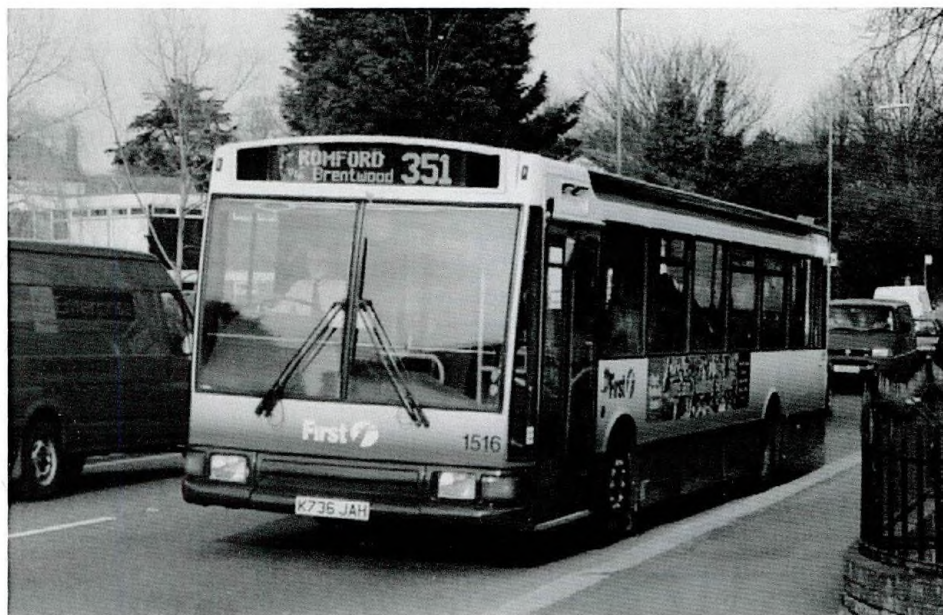
(P501-13MNO), now 67001-13. These were later joined by five from Eastern Counties (latterly 67036-40: K736-40JAH, since all





withdrawn and scrapped) and three from PMT (60102-4: P868-70MBF). The Dennis Lance is/was more commonly found within First Group carrying Plaxton Verde or Wright bodywork and the First Essex examples are now unique in this respect. As the last step

entrance saloons apart from the remaining Darts, their days are now numbered and a few have already been delicensed and stored. On 28th April this year, Chris Stewart captured 67003 passing the Cherry Tree pub in Blackheath en route to West Mersea, the



67/67A being a regular haunt of these buses for many years as seen by his earlier photograph of 1501 at the Mersea terminus on 19th June 2001. Chelmsford's 67007 was also recorded along London Road, Stanway on 28th April whilst the former Eastern Counties batch is represented by 1516 (K736JAH) passing the Marygreen Manor

Hotel, Brook Street, Brentwood on 17th March 2004. Fleet numbers changed from the old 1964 ENOC system to the First Sema series the following day, 'Barbie 2' livery has now been eliminated from the fleet and the 351 no longer serves this stretch of road towards Romford.

Arriva

■ ARRIVA SOUTHEND LIMITED

Further vehicles withdrawn as a result of the service reductions at the end of March are Scania/Wrights 3253/4/5.

The route 29 branding has been removed from Dart SLFs 3391, 3392, 3421 & 3431. There are currently no route branded vehicles at Southend.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Richard Delahoy and Essex Bus y-group

TGM Group

■ NETWORK COLCHESTER

Dart SLF 413 (S313 JUA) has been on loan to TGM Stansted since 28th April.

From 3rd May a contract for Vion Foods (Grampian Country Foods) at Witham commenced. Numbered 804, it operates Tolleshunt Knights - Tiptree - Heybridge - Maldon - Writtle - Braintree - Witham.

Further to EBN563, it was Scania 869 which replaced Scania 870 at Colchester. 869 has itself now returned to Stansted.

Optare Solo 2511 remains on loan from Harlow.

Rail Replacement:

Underground replacement Saturday 12th March; Leytonstone to Stratford buses 102/4-6.
Underground replacement Saturday 19th March; Barking to Mile End buses 103-6.
Underground replacement Sunday 20th March; Barking to Mile End buses 101/2/3/6.
Underground replacement Saturday 26th March; Barking to Mile End buses 103-6.
Underground replacement Sunday 27th March; Barking to Mile End buses 101-3/5.
Rail Replacement Sunday 3rd April; Newbury Park to Seven Kings buses 101-3/6.
Underground Replacement Saturday 9th April; Mile End to Barking buses 102/3/5/6.
Rail Replacement Monday 2nd May; Newbury Park to Shenfield buses 101/104/105/106.
Underground Replacement Sunday 10th April; Mile End to Barking buses 102/5/6.
Rail Replacement Saturday 23rd April; Newbury Park to Shenfield buses 101/2/5/6.
Rail Replacement Sunday 24th April; Newbury Park to Shenfield buses 101/2/4/6.
Rail Replacement Saturday 30th April; Newbury Park to Billericay buses 103/4/6.
Rail Replacement Monday 2nd May; Newbury Park to Shenfield buses 101/4/5/6.

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

Centrebus

Optare Solo 397 (YJ60 LRE) has been transferred to Dunstable.

Ian Ransom

Ensignbus

■ DEALING STOCK MOVEMENTS

Vehicles in	from
	Centrebus: Primos MX07 JPO/JPU
	London General: Darts R469/71 LGH, Y849 TGH, S109 EGK
Red Kite, Leighton Buzzard:	Solo SL52 BFU
Santander Finance:	London Tridents PN03 ULK/W, PJ02 PZR/S/Z
Stagecoach Cambridge:	B10Ms P851/5-7/9 GND, R513 KSA, P534 ESA
Stagecoach East Kent:	Olympian H803 BKK
Stagecoach London:	Volvo B10M M404 BFG, Darts V161 MVX, W202/3 DNO, LX51 FGA/D/G/M/K, Y338/71 FJN, Tridents X264-6 NNO
Stagecoach North West:	B10Ms R917 XVM, P127/34 XCN
Stagecoach South West:	P704/5/10/3 BTA
Stagecoach West:	Olympians G101/3 AAD
TWH, Harlow:	Falcon CN04 XCK

Vehicles out	to
	Falcon CN04 XCK: Access 360 Ltd , South Woodham Ferrers, Essex
	Olympian N716 LTN: Amber Coaches , Rayleigh, Essex
	Dart S110 EGK: Bear Buses , Staines
Dublin Olympian 98-D-20402/21	now R308 LHK, S951 YOO with Catteralls Coaches , Southam, Warwicks.
	Olympian F440 AKB: Freedom Travel , Ely, Cambs.
Tridents V173/9 MEV X287 NNO:	Garnetts Coaches , Bishop Auckland
Volvo B10B M517 WHF:	Holloways Coaches , Scunthorpe, Lincs.
Tridents X264/5 NNO:	Midland Classic , Burton-on-Trent
Dublin B6 00-D-70023	now X969 CNO with
Dart S451 WAT:	New Adventure Travel , Pontypridd
Dublin B6 00-D-70021:	New Horizon , Frating, Essex
Olympians M225 SVN M819 KRH:	Nottingham Minibus Hire
Dragons M683/5/9 TDB:	Grant Palmer , Dunstable, Beds.
Trident V150 MEV:	Red Kite , Leighton Buzzard, Beds.
Dart Y862 TGH, Volvo B6s P705/6/10/3 BTA:	Roadrunner , Harlow, Essex
	Olympian E306 MSG: Roselyn Coaches , Par, Cornwall
Dart T51 KLD, Trident T194 CLO:	Solihull Travel
Dart R449 LGH, DAFs 00-D-96300/1:	Tates Travel , Barnsley
Volvo B10M P859 GND:	Turners Coaches , Halstead, Essex
Darts R453/69 LGH:	Walsall Community Transport
Darts R566 UOT, R471 LGH, S109 EGK:	Watts Coaches , Cardiff
Darts S105/6 EGK:	Xelabus , Eastleigh, Hants.
Dart R562 UOT:	Z&S , Aylesbury, Bucks.
Dublin Olympian 98-D-20431:	Bankski Tours , Adelaide, Australia
Volvo B10M R985 XVM:	Sawila-Moloko Transport , Pretoria, South Africa

■ ENSIGN BUS

Volvo Hybrid demonstrator BK10 MG V is on loan for two weeks and will be used across the Thurrock Network.

■ CITY SIGHTSEEING

Tridents V901/3FEC have been sold to Bath Bus Co. (RATP UK) as full open tops, allocated to Windsor and Cardiff respectively. Dublin Olympian 97-D-345, now P776 SWC, is a full open top with Bath Bus Co., at Eastbourne.

David Harman with thanks to Ross Newman of Ensignbus

Lea Valley Buses (Gemma Smith)

The PSV Circle report the following vehicles to be with Gemma Smith for operation of services 255 (Waltham Cross – Debden) and 555 (Harlow – Loughton):

RDZ 1709	Scania N113CRL	Wright	B39F
RDZ 1711	Scania N113CRL	Wright	B39F
P103 HNH	Dennis Dart	Alexander	DP40F
P677 RWU	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton	B35F
P678 RWU	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton	B35F
P681 RWU	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton	B35F
R187 DNM	Mercedes 0814D	Plaxton	B27F
R477 LGH	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton	B33F
R479 LGH	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton	B33F

Ian Ransom

Olympus / Roadrunner / SM Coaches

Acquired from Abellio, London are Dennis Dart SLF/Alexander BU05 HDO/V, these are intended for use on Village Link service 7 (Bishops Stortford – Stansted Village) Also acquired are Mercedes Benz Vario/Plaxton R112 GNW and R450 PRH

Vehicles sold are Scania K113/Irizar L100 SCS to Plaxton (dealer), Anston, while the remains of fire damaged Dennis Dart SLF R809 OYS (DMN 28R), have gone for scrap

Ian Ransom

Regal Busways

The remains of scrapped Dennis Darts 507 (K877 UDB), 532 (J532 DUV) and Leyland Olympian 1205 (SJR 617Y) have all been removed from the Cooksmill Green depot. MAN/Enviro 200 EU10 OJE is numbered 702.

Ian Ransom

Stephensons of Essex

Acquired

722 J722 GAP, Leyland Olympian/Alexander H82F ex Stagecoach.

YN07 LHD, Scania N94UD/Scania H/F ex Reading Buses 599 (originally a Scania demonstrator, and until recently running on ethanol fuel). It has not yet been decided if this

bus will go onto the fleet or be sold on.

For disposal

730, F630 MSL Olympian/Alexander, is advertised for sale.

Withdrawn

747 H347 SWA Leyland Olympian/Alexander, which had only recently entered service but sustained accident damage whilst running dead to take up service and is now withdrawn; after having major components recovered it will be scrapped.

Disposals

783, G183 GHJ, Olympian/Alexander, withdrawn some while ago for cannibalisation, was sold to a local scrap dealer in February. Also sold for scrap was Olympian/Northern Counties, F252 YJJ, which had been acquired from Wealden (dealer) for spares.

Ian Ransom with thanks to Richard Delahoy

Other operators

ACCESS ANYONE, Southend Airport A further Peugeot Boxer here is FX05 LLA.

AC ROSS, Braintree LDV Convoy S309 VAW has been sold.

APT TRAVEL, Rayleigh Recently acquired is CU06 KBE a Scania K???/Irizar, ex GMK Travel, Brentford. It has been re-registered PT06 APT.

BARKERBUS, Roydon Acquired is a Duple 425, no further details are currently known. MAN 10.180/Caetano WIW 8983 (H397 CJF) has been sold to Atlantic, Bolton.

BUS 2 BUS, Shoeburyness Mercedes Benz 307D/PMT F341 SEH, has been sold for export.

BUS 4 US, High Easter Although based at the Lodges depot, Plaxton Primo YX07 HNP spends most of its day, on the Holiday Inn shuttle service at Stansted Airport.

CEDRIC, Ardleigh Leyland Olympian K815 HMV is back in use, after a long period stored.

COUNTY COACHES, Brentwood Ayats Bravo 3168 RU, has been renamed Wiltshire (was Warwickshire), Volvo B10M/Van Hool 5189 RU, has been named Rutland, Mercedes Benz Vario 9803 RU has been named Kent, similar T81 JBA is named Sussex.

CRUSADER HOLIDAYS, Clacton Vauxhall Vivaro DV58 HZE, used for feeder work, has been sold to Corkys, Cannock.

FLORIDA, Halstead Iveco minibus R364 LRP has been converted to a mobile sales office.

KB COACHES, Wickford VW LT35, C541 VHO has returned to use, after a long period out of use

KEANE, Canvey Island The reference to M68 DLN last month, is incorrect. This vehicle remains with Mortlock, East Tilbury.

NEED A BUS, Bowers Gifford Mercedes Benz Vario/Autobus V376 LHS (V7 CTL) has been sold to Airport Express, Wolverhampton.

NEW HORIZON, Frating Dennis Dart/Plaxton M61 VJO has been sold for use as a non-PSV.

PHILLIPS, South Woodham Ferrers Acquired some time ago, from the former A&D, Laindon fleet was Mercedes Benz 411D/Olympus MF51 CLJ.

SBC, Wickford LDV Convoy P676 LWA has been sold.

STANS, Gt Totham Mercedes Benz Vario/Autobus 160 EBK, was re-registered R307 PTF and sold to Emblings, Guyhirn in January.

STUARTS MINIBUSES, Wickford Acquired is LDV Convoy AE53 KXJ.

TERRAVISION, Stansted A further vehicle for the Stansted Airport to London service is Scania K360EB/Irizar YT10 WLC. Previously reported YT10 WLA/B/D are confirmed, as having the same chassis.

TURNERS, Little Maplestead Vehicles sold are L932 TGT a DAF 400 and M714 YJC a Mercedes Benz 709D/Marshall.

TWH, Waltham Abbey Dennis Dart/Plaxton S609 HGD has been sold to Tates Travel, Low Barugh.

WARD, Alresford Optare Spectra L128 ELJ is out of use, following accident damage. Acquired from Weavaway, Newbury, is Bova Futura WA53 FDJ.

*Ian Ransom with thanks to PSV Circle,
Alan Timms, John Podgorski,
www.harlowride.co.uk*

Where next for "The Bus"?

Not seen out and about for quite a few years now, former Wigan Massey-bodied Leyland PD2 FEK 3F used to be a playbus in the Chelmsford area but as readers of *Bus & Coach Preservation* magazine will have seen, it was offered for sale recently by Chelmsford Borough Council, having reportedly been out of use "since at least 2004". Richard Delahoy was pleasantly surprised to find it tucked away at the little known Centre for Science for Schools & Industrial Heritage, based at the Sandford Mill pumping station near Chelmer Village, when he attended their public open day on April 30th.

The bus is parked in the open but with some shelter from nearby buildings, and judging by the moss growing on the window frames, the estimate that it has been disused for at least seven years is no exaggeration! That said, it is appears complete and sound, albeit with the interior gutted. It is not known if the advertisement and invitation for sealed bids (to be submitted by March 31st) has resulted in a sale, but meanwhile it remains stored.

For more info on Sandford Mill, see
www.chelmsford.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6790



Transports of Delight

Memoirs of a Bus Anorak : 1940 to 2010

by the Revd. Terry Challis

Chapter 10 : Being a Passenger and Customer in Birmingham: Again!

Following on from Chapter 8 (EBN 556, August 2010), we noted in our October issue that Terry and wife June set off for a temporary new life in Kenya, from September 1972 to December 1975 - the story of his bus experiences there are available on-line as Chapter 9, along with the rest of Terry's articles - at www.workingonthebuses.co.uk, a site dedicated to collecting stories from the human side of the bus industry. Here we pick up the story again as Terry returns to the UK.

In March 1976 I was licensed as the Priest-in-Charge of Christ Church Sparkbrook and Assistant Community Relations Chaplain in the Diocese of Birmingham. Sparkbrook was not a completely new area to us as we had been involved with Christ Church and with the area as a whole when we were at Crowther Hall in 1971/2. As the vicarage was occupied by another vicar at the time, we moved into a terrace house in Dolobran Road only a few hundred yards from Christ Church. We eventually moved into the vicarage, which was situated next to Christ Church in the summer of 1977.

Sparkbrook is a multi-cultural, multi-faith and multi-racial inner-city area to the east of Birmingham. The parish begins at Camp Hill about a mile from the Bull Ring where the Coventry Road (A45) and the Stratford Road (A34) divide. The parish stretches a mile or so along the Stratford Road to the South and is bounded by the Birmingham to Warwick railway line to the North. Small Heath is about a mile away from the vicarage. Indeed, in the early days when we did not have a car, we took Debbie in the push-chair on the train into Birmingham (Moor Street) from Small Heath Station. Sparkbrook is a very interesting area and I never grew tired of walking around it on when parish-visiting. There was always something interesting to see: not least in the bus world!

As Priest-in-Charge of Christ Church, I was fortunate to have the support of two very conscientious Churchwardens. One was Newton Palmer who had come from Jamaica to join the RAF during the Second World War. He was very diligent in his duties. He was always at the church at least an hour before the Sunday morning services and read the first lesson every Sunday. He worked for Birmingham City Council. The other was Arnold Brown who had been a foreman tyre-fitter for Goodyear at Birmingham City Transport garages before retirement. One of the things that he pointed out to me was that the smartest buses that I saw on the road were not necessarily the most reliable. This was because when a bus spent time in the garage being maintained or repaired, it gave the body shop people an opportunity to tidy up or touch up the paint work and do other repairs. The buses that kept going day after day did not receive so much attention.

Transport-wise we could not have been better served. No less than eight bus routes ran into the centre of Birmingham along Stratford Road from its junction with Farm Road which was only a few minutes' walk away. The services from the Warwick Road met the Stratford Road services at Sparkbrook where they combined to create a very frequent service into the centre of Birmingham. Some ran into the City via Bradford Street and the rest via the Coventry Road. As far as I was concerned, it did not matter which route they took: I just caught the first bus to come along. I never had to wait more than a few minutes. The 'exact fare/fare-box' system was still in operation and still seemed to me to be the best way of collecting fares on city bus routes, with the exception of off-bus ticketing.

All the services from Sparkbrook were operated mainly by fairly new Daimler Fleetlines, but there were more interesting

buses along the Coventry Road at Small Heath. Service 16 from Yardley to Hamstead, one of the few cross-city routes, was still crew operated by ex-Birmingham City Transport Guys and Daimlers. Older Fleetlines were to be found on the 8A and 8C which ran across the southern end of the parish. The 'A' standing for 'anti-clockwise' and 'C' for 'clockwise'. A couple of miles further south, the Stratford Road is crossed at Hall Green by the famous Outer Circle(11A/C) which, at that time, was still crew-operated with a mixture of ex-Birmingham Guys and Daimlers and ex-West Bromwich Daimler CVG6-30s with MCW 'Orion' bodies. I once travelled on one of these vehicles from Harborne to Hall Green and was very impressed by it.

The only other bus company to operate through the Parish of Christ Church was 'Midland Red' who maintained the old 'Stratford Blue' service to Stratford with their

standard Alexander-bodied Daimler 'Fleetlines'. I never had cause to take advantage of this service.

One of the advantages of Birmingham as a city is its geographical location. Indeed, if an English Parliament was ever created, Birmingham would be the natural location for it as it is the most central city in England. From Birmingham it is possible to travel to almost every part of England 'and back' in one day! This is a great advantage when planning church (or any kind of) outings. At Christ Church the Sunday School was not big enough to have its own outing but we had a Church outing every year. These outings were very efficiently organised by the Parish Secretary, Mrs. Helen Collins. The coach firm used was usually Den Caney Coaches of Wolverhampton. They usually supplied a Bedford VAL with a Duple 'Commander' body.

In Terry's days in Birmingham, the West Midlands fleet was dominated by Daimler Fleetlines, mostly bodied by MCW but including many Park Royal examples such as 3760, KOX 760F, seen passing Digbeth coach station on April 22, 1982 amid typical Birmingham inner city scenery. Following are a Leyland Titan and Leyland National. Did Terry go coach spotting at Digbeth, I wonder?



One year we went to Llandaff Cathedral and Barry Island. This was memorable because the Challis Family spent most of the time at Barry Island under the pier sheltering from the rain! However the visit to Llandaff Cathedral made the trip worthwhile. Other destinations for outings were Blackpool and Southport, both of which were very enjoyable. I remember the Blackpool visit because the VAL had a puncture in one of its near-side front wheels on the M6. All fifty or so of us, with a traffic police escort, stood or sat on the bank at the side of the motorway while the driver jacked up the coach and changed the wheel.

Christ Church stood at the junction of Farm Road, Grantham Road and Dolobran Road. The other end of Farm Road was Stratford Road and on one corner of that junction stood the garage, office and workshops of Smith's Imperial Coaches. Smith's ran a fleet of very smart coaches on excursions, extended tours, summer express services and private hires. The list of their day excursions included such far flung places as Aberystwyth, Blackpool, Bournemouth, Clacton-on-Sea, Hunstanton, Llandudno and Teignmouth. Smith's Coaches also ran coaches to the away matches of Birmingham City Football Club whose ground, St. Andrew's, is about a mile away from Farm Road.

I availed myself of their services one Wednesday to travel back to my home county of Essex and visit Margaret's mother in Clacton. The coach was a Bedford VAM and it set us down at the Eastern National Wash Lane Coach Park; it was a real home coming! I think the fare in the mid-1970s was about £2! The journey time was between four and five hours each way.

For the bus enthusiast, Smith's Coaches was a very interesting company. In my time in Sparkbrook their fleet consisted almost entirely of Duple and Plaxton-bodied Bedfords (VAMs, VALs and YRTs) although their first Ford, an R1114 with Van Hool body, arrived in 1976. However from 1979 Smith's Coaches purchased heavyweight coaches such as AECs and Leylands. I think that it is true to say that they discovered that lightweight coaches, such as Fords and

Bedfords, were not well suited to long-distance motorway work.

However in the early post-war years Smith's Coaches had a very interesting fleet which included Maudslay Marathons, Leyland PS1s, an AEC Regal III and Fodens which they bodied themselves. Later the fleet included 2 Fodens with Bellhouse Hartwell bodies, a trio of Daimler CVD6s with Burlingham Seagull bodies and a Daimler D650HS with Duple Elizabethan body: their first underfloor engined coach. There were also a few Bedford-Duple Vistas and a couple of Commer Commandos with Plaxton bodies. Anyone who wishes to know more about this interesting coach company should read *It's A Pleasure - It's Smiths* by Roger Smith (Published by Brewin Books ISBN 1-85858-222-9). Roger was the third generation chairman of the company when the firm closed at the end of 2001 after serving the people of Birmingham for 77 years.

My final recollection for this chapter is of a church outing to Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon where the Revd. Roger Spiller was the curate. Roger had been a member of Christ Church, Sparkbrook before ordination and he had invited us all to tea and evensong. This took place on one Sunday afternoon in the summer of 1979.

As usual, the arrangements were made by the ever efficient Helen Collins. However on the day I was surprised (and pleased!) to discover that the transport provided was not the usual Bedford from Den Caney Coaches but a dual-purpose Leyland National from West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority. This was one of the long Leyland Nationals delivered in 1978 with a 'T' suffix registration. This vehicle proved to be very suitable and we all had very enjoyable outing. As I remarked at the time, it was a truly multi-cultural event with passengers from both the Afro-Caribbean and indigenous white communities and a driver from the Asian community!

Having referred in this chapter to Christ Church Sparkbrook, I feel that I must include the sad news that the church itself was badly damaged by a tornado in July 2005. As a result, the building had to be demolished for



Terry recalls a private hire trip to Stratford upon Avon with a West Midlands DP seated Leyland National; they certainly did cover some long distance private hires, as evidenced by 6828, OOX 828R seen by *Richard Delahoy* in the coach park at Southend Seaway on a sunny July 30th, 1977, alongside the more typical fare to be found on day trips to Sarfend. The Leyland National counted as the second most interesting vehicle spotted that Saturday afternoon as Richard cycled round Southend. The most interesting? Brand new Eastern National Bristol VR 3064, UVX 1S, freshly delivered and tucked away in a corner at SD depot, yet to enter service.

safety reasons. However, all is not lost, for there are plans to build a Health Centre (Super Surgery) on the site and this building will include a worship area for the congregation.

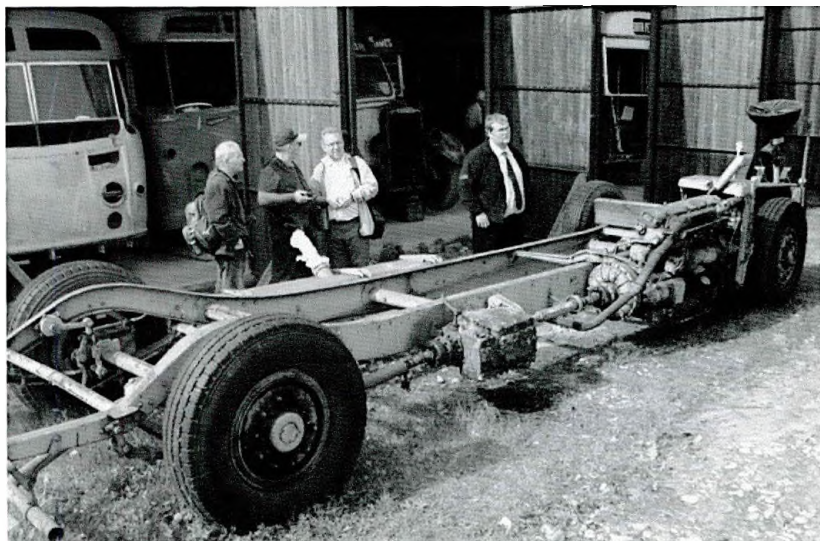
In 1980, June and I felt that we should move to the south-east of England for family reasons. We had enjoyed our time in Sparkbrook and we knew that we would be leaving behind some good friends. However we had decided that it was time to leave. The Challis family that left Sparkbrook had increased by one during our time there. Our

son, Jonathan was born at the Sorrento Hospital at Moseley in May 1978.

The first parish, or rather group of parishes, that I was invited to look at was in Suffolk. However, being basically a 'townie', I decided that rural Suffolk was not for me. And, more importantly, that I should not impose myself on rural Suffolk! Eventually we moved to north London: but more about that in the next chapter.

*Edited by Richard Delahoy
who also took the photos*

Essex Oldies in Norfolk



The chassis of former **Westcliff on Sea Motor Services** AEC Q JN 5783 was sold at auction recently for £1,850. New to Westcliff in 1935, it was requisitioned by the War Department in 1944 but unlike many similar

such vehicles, it survived the war, and passed to the predecessors of Smith & Sons, of Pylle, Somerset. They operated it from 1949 to 1959. After withdrawal it was purchased by AEC where it was overhauled



as an apprentice exercise. The Harrington coach body was removed as it was thought to be beyond restoration. After a period in storage, it was donated to the Science Museum in 1964, and until recently was part of their collection at Wroughton, Wilts.

A trio in partnership are the new owners and the chassis is being stored in Norfolk.

The second Essex oldie in Norfolk is Commer-Harrington integral demonstrator JAP 658, which spent most of its operational life with Audawn Coaches of Corringham. After many years withdrawn, it was acquired for preservation and is undergoing long term restoration work, along with a Harrington bodied Leyland Tiger, Foden and Dennis Lancet.

Owen Woodliffe, who also took the photos



JN 5783 in Gloucester Green Bus Station, Oxford, whilst with "Smith's Observation Coaches". RHG Simpson

Maltese Regal Survivor



The Maltese AEC Regal III (chassis 0962147) on the inside rear cover, still running in 2011, has an interesting Essex history although it began life with one of London's most respected coach operators.

Charles Rickards had begun horse cab operations from Paddington in 1850 and for many years held a Royal Warrant to transport members of the royal household. In the 1920s, they ran luxurious 27-seat Saurer tour coaches and some small Albions on inter-station work but in the run-up to World War II these had given way to AECs, Bedfords and Commers. After the War, operations resumed using AEC Regals, Daimler CVD6s, Austins and Commers, bodied by Plaxton or Strachans. Our vehicle, HYP309, was new to them in 1948 and carried Plaxton C32F bodywork. It even made a brief appearance on the big screen in 1953, passing London RTL478 (KLB697) at one point during Norman Wisdom's 'Trouble in Store' (see www.busesonscreen.net), but by 1957 had moved to a quieter life in Essex where it ran for several years with J D

Best & Son of Great Bromley - here it was captured on film on 7th August 1958, complete with period schoolboys! In the second photo it is awaiting departure from Colchester to Great Bromley on their stage service, which at one time required double deckers but latterly saw HYP as the regular vehicle.

The Regal moved with Best's business in 1960 to Catt & Swinn, who reintroduced double deckers on the service. By 16th February 1962, as can be seen, the body had been removed and the chassis was en route to Malta where it arrived the following month. Sold by the importing dealer to the owner of licence 921, his death in the latter part of 1963 put the project on hold. The rebuild was eventually completed in April 1965 with a 28'3" long 36-seat body by Zammit of Hamrun, the width of which (7'9") initially caused some problems until the Naxxar route was approved for 8' wide vehicles from May 1965. Later re-registered A-0921, the Regal gained a secondhand Leyland 400 engine in March 1971 but



eventually reverted to AEC power (the first of two 505s) in February 1995. Further re-registrations were to Y1047 in 1982, Y0346 in 1984 and finally its current DBY346, gaining the sunshine yellow livery along the way in place of the older pale green and light grey. It was upseated to B40F in 1985, permission to increase this further to 44 in 1987 not being taken up, but the entrance was modified in 1995 and two further seats added then. The single piece windscreen was added some time between 1979 and 1981 and the grille later rebuilt.

As many will know, Malta is set for sweeping changes to its bus services on 3rd July this year, when all the existing 'route buses' and the current owner/driver set-up will be replaced by new and ex London low

floor vehicles as Arriva begins a new government contract to operate the network. Of the current 500 or so vehicles, it is thought that about 60 are being retained by their owners and a few of the current low floors may see use with Arriva. For the vast majority, however, it will be the end of several decades' faithful service. If you can get there before 3rd July, then do so. It will be your last chance to capture scenes such as our one here of DBY346 at the old capital of Rabat/Mdina on 1st November 2010.

With grateful thanks to Geoff Mills for 1958/1962 photographs and to Richard Stedall (Editor of www.busesworldwide.com) for the Maltese history.

Chris Stewart

rear cover: **Ensign** recently had Volvo B5L Hybrid/Wright demonstrator **BK10 MG**V on loan for two weeks, mostly operating on the X80 and Thurrock area services. It is seen here on the X80 at Lakeside on May 7. *Russell Young*

The first of the Sandon Park & Ride Scania Omnicities to be repainted into standard livery is **65028** (YN06 TDO) still named "Holland", here emerging from Market Road in Chelmsford. *Kevin Smith*



Maltese Regal Survivor



DBY 346 in Rabat: above - Chris Stewart, below - Owen Woodliffe



