

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 708 April 2023



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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A London Busman's Career, 1946-1972

Laurie Akehurst

Published by Capital Transport. 220 x 305 mm, casebound, 96 pages. £19.95

This is another book about London Transport that has a strong Essex interest. Laurie Akehurst is an accomplished author of books about London Transport (most recently, his 'London Transport Country Buses Part 2 - North', which we reviewed last month) but in this case, the subject of the story is his father, Edward Ronald (Ron). After starting with LT at Cricklewood in 1946 as a conductor, Ron transferred to Epping garage in 1960, taking advantage of the offer of a house in the developing Harlow New Town, and hence making a move from Central Buses to the Country Area. LT then built a brand-new garage in Harlow [still used by Arriva today and which has a 60th birthday celebration in May, see page 3] and Ron transferred there in 1963 when Epping closed.

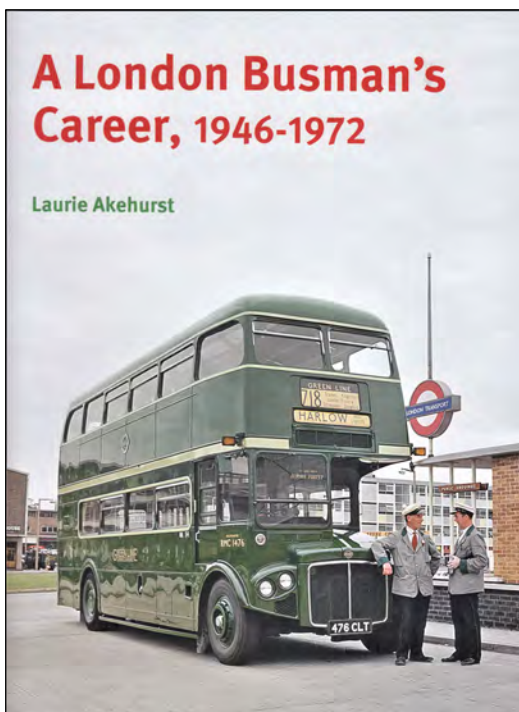
At both Epping and Harlow, Ron spent significant times working on the Green Line coach services, the 718 to Windsor and the 720/A to Aldgate. He also worked on the 339 which extended into Eastern National's territory, running from Epping to Brentwood and Warley and he records that one early turn duty took its meal break in EN's Brentwood depot. He also explains how and why the 339 ran as a through service towards Warley but heading for Epping most buses involved a change and a wait of 20 minutes or so in Ongar!

My favourite story concerns the time after the family had moved to Harlow but Epping garage was still open. To appreciate the tale, you need to remember the days when not every house had a phone. Anyway, Ron was on rest day and, along with the family, was asleep when early in the morning there was a knock on their front door. It was the Epping garage inspector, with a Green Line RF (with driver) and a ticket machine box. Would Ron kindly work his rest day, as the booked conductor had not turned up? The coach was running dead to Harlow to take up service on the 718 to Windsor and duly did so fully crewed once Ron had got up and dressed!

He also recounts how there were no staff buses at Epping and on Saturday nights, the last Eastern National 322 from Euston to Braintree would pick up LT crews at Epping to get them home in Harlow, presumably without payment. There are plenty of other stories of the operations of buses and coaches and tales of their passengers, many of whom were regular users.

With the march of one man operation, including the use of farebox fitted MBS standee single-deckers on Harlow town services and then AN class Atlanteans, many conductors were offered voluntary redundancy and as he was in his 65th year Ron decided to take up the offer, leaving in December 1972 and thus ending a career dating back to 1946.

The Epping and Harlow days form the majority of the book and are a fascinating insight to crew work. The book is thoroughly recommended and is well illustrated, all the pictures in black & white apart from the glorious cover shot, an official LT photo, of RMC1476 outside the then new Harlow garage, featuring Ron (right) with driver Fludgate. Apparently they were selected for the pose as both were correctly attired in full uniform, including caps!





This page: The last day of Ensignbus as an independent company, 9 March 2023. A convoy of three buses, RT8 (FXT 183), Metrobus 192 (F292 NHJ) and Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 130 (LX15 GPY) in gold 50th Anniversary livery, transported Peter, Ross and Steve Newman to Purfleet, with Ross driving 192 through a guard of honour by staff as seen above. RT8 appropriately had '51' in the roof box, to indicate 51 years of the company.

Right: Steve, Peter and Ross.

All **John G Lidstone**



Front Cover: Brand new First Essex StreetLite 63463 (MC72 UYB) on route 28 in Chichester Road, Southend on 30 March 2023. **Dave Arnold**



Group Information

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer & Membership
Distribution, Publication & Sales
Publications Co-ordinator
Tours Organiser

Ian Ransom
Alan Osborne
Richard Delahoy
Owen Woodliffe
Paul Harvey
Wayne Bell

Missing or Defective EBMs
Please contact Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road,
Chingford, E4 8PT
pat_woodliffe@hotmail.com
Owen stocks a wide range of colour photos, please
send an SAE for details.

Editorial Team

Editor & First Essex and Central Connect

Adam Kelleher
74 Park Road
Brentwood, Essex
CM14 4TU
adamxxxx4@yahoo.co.uk

Arriva Southend & Colchester

Richard Delahoy, address opposite
(Arriva Harlow notes to Adam Kelleher,
address above)

Ensignbus and Hedingham & Chambers

Mark Lloyd
133 Hazelton Road
Colchester, Essex CO4 3DY
lloydhousehold448@gmail.com

Service Revisions, Panther Travel, Lodge Coaches and Publicity

Ian Ransom, ianransom2008@googlemail.com

Stephensons & NIBS

Richard Delahoy, address opposite

Smaller Operators

Roger A Smith, 3 Station Mews
Station Road, Witham, Essex
CM8 2FP

Ipswich Buses in Essex

Robert Appleton, rcappleton29@gmail.com

Vectare

Chris Stewart, shenfield252@gmail.com

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may join from any month, but subscriptions will always
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inclusive pay a pro-rata subscription calculated at
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March would pay 10 x £2.30, i.e., £23. Please
contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road,
Southend-on-Sea, SS1 3TT
richard.delahoy@blueyonder.co.uk

EBM Extra

EBM is published monthly. In addition, we aim to
publish two Extras each year full of historical features.
These are supplied to members free of charge, subject
to funding.

Membership Records & Data Protection

A statement of our compliance with the GDPR is
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Reports, Articles & Photographs

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

Target Dates for EBM 709

Reports to Sub-Editors	29 April
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	5 May
Dispatch by Printers on or before	13 May

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent
up to 6th and will be included if possible, if not it will
be held over to the next month.

Views expressed in EBM do not necessarily reflect the
opinions of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group or
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Group Notices

Membership News

Welcome to new members:

Ian Mills, Basildon - 1211

Geoff Rose, Benidorm, Spain - 1212

Paul Wade, Colchester - 1213.

With these latest new members, this takes our membership total to 300.

Annual General Meeting

We are pleased to announce that after a Covid enforced break the Annual General Meeting for 2023 will be held on Wednesday 12 July commencing at 1430, at a location TBA in Chelmsford.

Please note this will be only an AGM and there will not be the traditional slide show afterwards.

Plans are being made to recommence Chelmsford meetings from September onwards, jointly with the Omnibus Society. Further information on both of these will be published when available.

The Running Card

by Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Sunday 16 April: Spring Gathering, London Bus Museum, Brooklands KT13 OQN.

Saturday 22 April: NS70. Open Day at Stagecoach North Street, Romford Garage.

Sunday 7 May: Ipswich-Felixstowe Run. Depart Christchurch Park 1100. Display at Felixstowe Promenade from midday.

Monday 8 May: Eastern National Heritage Running Day. Museum of Power, Langford, Maldon CM9 6QA.

Sunday 14 May: Bus Day, Mid Norfolk Railway, Dereham Station.

Sunday 21 May: Harlow Classic Bus Running Day, details on poster **right**.

Sunday 21 May: Open Day at Canvey Bus Museum.

Sunday 21 May: Fenland Bus Festival, Whittlesey. Free 30 mins bus from Peterborough to the site, and services to the Classic Car Show at Ramsey, also Yaxley, Turvey, Thorley and March.

Saturday 27 May: Theydon Bois Transport Bazaar. Village Hall CM16 7ER.

Sunday 11 June: Bromley Pageant of Motoring, Norman Park Bromley.

Sunday 18 June: Fathers' Day event at Canvey Transport Museum.

Sunday 18 June: Showbus Flyby Brunel University to High Wycombe.

Sunday 25 June: Summer on the Buses. London Bus Museum, Brooklands, Surrey

Saturday 8 July: Omnibus Society Special London Meeting to mark 90 years since the creation of London Transport "How and why did London's Transport become London Transport". Talk by Dr. James Fowler, University of Essex. Venue is The Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3BU, start time 1400 for 1430. All EBEG Members are welcome to attend. This talk is dedicated to the memory of the late John Taylor, a long-standing OS & EBEG member and is funded by a legacy he left to the OS.

Events are published in good faith. However, the Group cannot be responsible for any changes due to future circumstances. Please check before travelling.



Follow Ups to Previous Issues

Photo of 2539 in EBM 707

We asked for information on the location of Eastern National Bristol FS 2539 on route 335 to Maldon.

Dave Arnold writes: "It looks like it's come down Farnbridge Road, Maldon and is turning into Cross Road, then to Cups Corner Mill Road and finally into the bus station. The houses on the right have been replaced, a modern view of the scene is **right**". This location has also been confirmed by **Andrew Longhurst** who adds that the photo was taken during the short period after the 335 had been extended for a while to South House Estate from 1964.



More on Reversing

Gordon Greig writes: "Another great magazine, full of news, interest, history for everyone, good review of the 'London Transport Country Buses Part 2 - North' book. I remember in the 1960s when Grays Garage was all RT. It did remind me of route 374 to Linford which at East Tilbury reversed in a lane whilst still carrying passengers for Linford and picking up at 'The Ship' Public House to go to Grays".

Ian Barlex writes: "I've been interested to read the pieces in recent EBM's concerning reversing at terminals, but I hardly expected to see a three point turn at a terminal as occurred with Hedingham route 72 in Brentwood High Street this morning (Saturday 11 March 2023). The western end of the High Street is currently closed for works, leading to all sorts of diversions and temporary stopping arrangements. The morning 72 (in at 1005 out at 1044), operated by Solo 911 (SF04 SKE), took its stand time in the High Street near Wilson's Corner facing west, then, at departure time, having altered the blind to Stondon Massey, the driver pulled forward and did a three point turn before picking up on the north side of the High Street and departing! This was all made practicable, of course, by the significant reduction in High Street traffic caused by the closure further up the road."



707 for EBM 707

John Card and **Owen Woodliffe** have both corrected an error in the caption, plus provided some additional information. The Union flags on the front of TYE 707S are not related to British Coachways, which did not commence until October 1980, the month the vehicle was sold. They were actually applied when the vehicle was new in 1977 as part of livery adornments for the Queen's Silver Jubilee (applied to all new Ewer Group deliveries during that year). They can be seen here as the vehicle was used in Bedford publicity <https://tinyurl.com/3b87f2vv>. [Editor's note: my mistake, not the photographer Fred Lawrance's.]

Although new as C49F the vehicle had been re-seated to C53F by the time of the photo. Fred's photo taken in 1980 is also interesting as the joint National / Grey Green service 136 had been revised that year to replace facilities of withdrawn 122 (Ipswich - Folkestone) which was one of the original 1964 Dartford Tunnel joint services.

Dan's Coach Travel

Ironically, no sooner had the two photos of ex First Essex Scania YS03 ZKF appeared in last month's EBM, than Dan's acquired another vehicle (SF06 WDL, a PSVAR spec Volvo B12M / Plaxton Panther from Chalkwell which they have named 'Maurice') and sold this one to an operator in Northampton on 14 March!

Jigsaw Puzzles

Peter Newman writes: "The photograph taken in Southend depicting a City D type in EBM 707, page 28 on which the painting on page 29 was based, was definitely taken after acquisition by Westcliff as its in their 'revised' City livery. It was before the Eastern National takeover as there are no fleet number plates visible."

Allan White writes: "EBM is another good read this month. I did find the item on the Southend jigsaw puzzle of interest as I do have this puzzle so the history behind it was very enlightening. I was doing jigsaw puzzles even before I got interested in buses so it was a coincidence that one of the early puzzles I did was of a Routemaster bus and was probably produced in the 1950s about the same time as the actual bus in question (RM1) was first being tested out on the road. I still have this puzzle after about 65 years and all the pieces are still there. More recently I obtained a puzzle featuring a 'cut out' picture of a Routemaster and that was more of a challenge to do in comparison to the old one which I have done so many times that I could almost do it with my eyes closed. Another jigsaw I also purchased more recently has the Southend bus from the puzzle in EBM 707 included as part of a compilation of Malcolm Root paintings, as shown **below**."

With thanks to **Richard Delahoy** for details on the buses, these are:

Top Row: Eastern National Bristol L5G / ECW 309 (ONO 49), now preserved, pictured on a school contract.
AEC Regal / Duple LRM 91 (probably a fictitious registration), operator not identified but clearly based on NXL 847, the preserved Eastern Belle Coaches of East London example. Pictured in the Lake District.
Leyland PS1 / Burlingham ENT 778, Comb's Coaches, Stowmarket. Now preserved in Premier Albanian livery.

Middle row: RAL 37, Barton 722, a Barton BTS1 rebuild of a Leyland PS1 / Plaxton, pictured on Scarborough seafront. VKH 44, East Yorkshire 644. AEC Regent V / Willowbrook with Beverley Bar style top deck, passing through the said archway.

Bottom row: Eastern National Bedford OB / Duple 193 (ONO 89), artistically placed in the Yorkshire Dales on a mystery tour. Southend Corporation Daimler CWA6 / Brush 226 (BHI 775), as illustrated in EBM 707.
Royal Blue (Southern National) Bristol LL6B / Duple 1264 (LTA 893), passing through Corfe Castle en route to Swanage.

All the original paintings are featured in the book 'Malcolm Root's Transport Paintings'.



EBM Extra 3

The latest EBM Extra has been very well received and we have some updates.

Premier Travel 'White Ladies'

In 'Scene in Saffron', it was stated that the preserved ex-Ribble 'White Lady' DCK 219 didn't run with Premier Travel. Wrong, it did! However, it didn't join the Premier Travel fleet at the same time as the main batch. It came later than the other ten, having served with Reliance of Newbury for nearly five years, as **Mike Penn** has pointed out.

Nigel Turner adds: "It most certainly was operated by Premier and therein lies a story. On 28 October 1972, I took a day off from my university studies to visit Cambridge so I could ride on a White Lady before they were withdrawn, and also to take a trip with Burwell & District. On arriving at Premier's depot at Chrishall, I found the management (the Chief Engineer I think) in conversation with a group of enthusiasts from 'up North' who were negotiating to buy DCK 219 for preservation. I can't now remember whether or not they were taking it away that day but they were clearly successful". Richard Delahoy admits that he should have looked more closely at the book 'Premier's Progress' and his 1967 edition of 'British Bus Fleets East Anglia', both of which list it under the 1966 acquisitions, the original ten having come in 1962.

Below: DCK 219 in preservation, owned by Rexquote Ltd, at Brough during the Kirkby Stephen Easter rally in April 2008. The snow had fallen rather unexpectedly overnight after the first day of the rally! **Richard Delahoy**



Candsall Coaches

Nigel also adds to the story of Candsall Coaches (Clacton), whose fleet name was illustrated on the inside rear cover: "In the caption you state that they were sold to Staines in the late 1960s. Although I've never been able to find out the exact details, I do know that Candsall ceased in June 1970 when the last two coaches were sold to Gwalia of Llanybyther. Existing operators R. Staines of Clacton and M. J. Goodall (t/a Crusader) of Ipswich joined forces in June 1970 as R. Staines & M. J. Goodall t/a Staines Crusader of 4, Hawkesway, Clacton. A PSV Circle news sheet of January 1973 states that R. Staines has moved to 78-80, Pier Avenue, Clacton. This was the former office address of Candsall (and previously Hicks). What is not clear is whether Staines simply bought the premises or whether they also acquired the goodwill at some point. Candsall Coaches (Clacton) Limited was wound up in February 1973 which suggests that it had remained in existence until the sale of the Pier Avenue and High Street premises."

Tyler's Avenue

Turning to Tyler's Avenue, **Chris Stewart** has shared with us an allocation list for April 1957, when Tyler's Avenue depot was home to 18 buses (not sure how they'd all fit!), comprising Bristol LS saloons 378/9/86-8/93, 401/7 (8) and Bristol LDs 1461-3/72-4, 1505-8 (10).

The Dawn of the Low-Floor Bus

Andy Gipson writes: "The article in EBM Extra 3 about low floor buses brought back many memories. In 1993 I was working for Essex County Council in their Public Transport Co-ordination Office under the auspices of the then Public Transport Co-ordinating Officer, the late Mike Merton. Mike was innovative and keen to develop new ideas for public transport operation in the county and it is hard to believe now, but we had a budget which extended far beyond the revenue support of bus services. In fact capital monies were available to spend on research and development and the financial process was to spend what we had in the current financial year, otherwise we might not have this budget for similar expenditure in future years.

"Following the creation of the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee (DiPTAC) from the Transport Act of 1985, there was considerable public discussion about the access / egress issues of buses and coaches. All vehicles before the low floor bus were designed with steps, sometimes two, three or four to board and alight, and there were certainly no vehicles on local bus services which could take wheelchairs. Mike therefore saw the opportunity to do something, and I was tasked with preparing the grant terms and conditions and the general organisation of getting this demonstration project on the road. The article refers to the Dennis Lance SLF / Wright Pathfinder 320 vehicles and it was decided, particularly in view of the lack of suitable alternatives being available, that these should be the vehicles to be used. Members of the Public Transport Committee visited Dennis at Guildford to see them being built, but the factory seemed to be building more fire engines than buses! I thought we should go to Wrights in Northern Ireland as well, but Members were reluctant to go, possibly because of political reasons at the time. Nevertheless, we sought approval for the buses and this was given, and Essex became one of the first transport shire authorities in the country to give financial support for the purchase of low floor buses.

"There were three operators who applied for grants, County Bus, Hedingham Omnibuses and Southend Transport. All were successful, with the strict conditions that they should operate on a specified route for two years and thereafter for a further eight years wholly within Essex. Southend at the time was under the administrative control of the County Council. County Bus wished to use them on their Harlow-Romford service 502 (alas no longer running) and we did some trial runs after they received their delivery of four. It soon became obvious that some bus stops were not suitable for low floor operation and the powered ramps when used grounded or were at too much of an angle for wheelchair users. This 'mind the gap' footway situation was solved by the introduction of the higher 'Kassel kerbs' which originated from Germany, primarily for tram operation. Kerb height was 180 mm which was 60 mm higher than the conventional kerb height used in the UK. There were some robust discussions with Essex Highways about this who were most reluctant to change design, but today virtually all bus stops in Essex have raised kerbs. The higher kerb did and sometimes still today causes issues if the driver does not align the vehicle properly against the kerb edge, causing near-side damage immediately in front of the door. Where there is a sub-standard lay-by drivers must be particularly careful. The other unknown was buggies or perhaps in those early days we just underestimated the demand. On one of the trials, we picked up a woman and child at a bus stop in Harlow and the ease of space to park the buggy and sit alongside was apparent for all to see. In the early days buggies dominated the low bus scene, but gradually over the years more wheelchair users now use local bus services.

"I do not recall DiPTAC giving much praise to Essex or indeed the three operators involved for this demonstration project, but it did pave the way for the future design of step-free buses (not coaches) on local bus services throughout the country".

David Reynolds adds: "Whilst I was at ECC we found out, courtesy of the Group's newsletter, that Arriva Southend had moved one of our funded buses out of Essex, in breach of the funding agreement, resulting in my sending them a letter requesting either its immediate return until the end of the agreement or face a financial penalty charge. Needless to say, it was immediately returned to Essex with an apology that they were unaware of the time limit clause. That was the end of the matter, with full contract compliance until the end of the contract term".

Turning to the fate of those ten pioneer low-floor buses, **Ian Ransom** advises that ex-Hedingham M211 WHJ is currently owned by a Matthew Thompson but we don't know where it is located or its current condition. The last photos of it on Flickr were taken two years ago, still in Panther Travel livery.

Concessionary Fares

The arrangements for reimbursing bus operators for the acceptance of concession (ENCTS) passes has long been a bone of contention with bus operators and is arguably not fit for purpose. Essex CC has a 'fixed pot' scheme (in preference to the less attractive, default DfT 'calculator' version), whereby, in negotiation with operators, a fixed sum of money is allocated to the scheme each year, setting the maximum that the County Council will pay out. Reimbursement is then calculated route by route based on the average adult fare actually paid and the number of pass holder journeys made on that route. This has resulted in operators receiving about 53% of the equivalent adult fare.

The scheme continued through the pandemic and the DfT encouraged Councils to continue to pay operators at the full pre-pandemic levels, despite the dramatic drop in passenger numbers. This, along with CBSSG (Covid-19 Bus Services Support Grant) enabled the industry to survive. Since then, passenger numbers have risen, although still short of the pre-pandemic levels for fare payers, but the recovery in concession pass trips has been much more muted and numbers are still substantially down. There are a number of reasons for this reluctance to travel and no signs that they will get back to historic levels.

Against this backdrop, whilst the DfT is still encouraging authorities to continue payments at pre-Covid levels, it is also permitting Councils to progressively reduce payments down to the level of actual use rather than at 100% of the pre-pandemic figures. In Essex's case, the scheme now agreed for 2023/4 for a fixed pot of £14.5m will see reimbursement reduce in quarterly steps until it reaches a floor based on actual passenger numbers. Hence for July / August / September, operators will receive 90% of the pre-Covid payment; for October / November / December, this drops to 80%; for January / February 2024 to 75% and to just 70% in March 2024. In all cases, if actual passenger numbers exceed these levels, operators will be paid for all the pass holder trips. There has been no allowance made for the substantial increase of about 25% in operating costs over the past three years!

Clearly this has major implications for bus operators given the significant amount of their revenue that comes from concession reimbursement. For 2022/3 the operators had agreed to maintain the existing bus network in return for payments remaining at 100% - hence, whilst we have seen some quite substantial frequency reductions over the past year, the overall network has remained intact, aside from a few relatively minor withdrawals. How long that can last now is in serious question. With frequencies already reduced to what many would consider the minimum viable level, the risk is that whole routes will start to be withdrawn as funding reduces, with the weakest performing services most at risk.

Whilst the Council has the power (but not the obligation) to provide subsidised replacements, the reality is that their funds are already fully committed, with little or no scope to replace commercial withdrawals. One approach might be to redirect existing subsidies away from more marginal cases (e.g., evening / Sunday services) in order to replace core daytime mileage that is at risk, but such a move would be unpopular and contractually difficult.

Southend and Thurrock are separate authorities. Southend's approach is even less supportive of bus operations - in the current quarter (April to June), reimbursement is reduced to 90% of pre-Covid levels, then to 80% for July to September, 75% for October to December and just 65% in January to March 2024 (unless actual passenger numbers exceed these percentage thresholds). And Southend does not subsidise any services. In Thurrock, there are separate arrangements negotiated for each operator and we are not sure of the exact scale and timing of the reduction in reimbursement. Here, it was announced in mid-March that they were to withdraw their bus subsidies completely, worth £427k, by axing support for three services, the 11, 265 and 374.

The danger now is that as 2023 progresses, we will see further cuts, not just in frequency but in the overall coverage of the bus network. Essex is not alone in facing this challenge which is on top of the current ending of central Government funding (Bus Recovery Grant) in June, as reported last month.

£2 Fare Cap

As also reported last month, the Government has extended the £2 single fare cap from the end of March to the end of June. So far as we know all the operators who were participating in the scheme are continuing to do so. Vectare however are only offering the £2 cap on the 13/14/22 between Waltham Cross and Waltham Abbey and on the 13/418 between North Weald and Epping station. Now that Ensignbus are owned by First Bus they joined the scheme on 1 April.

1 April 2023

68 (Daily) Southend Pier - Leigh-on-Sea Railway Station **Ensignbus**. Service reintroduced for 2023. Daily from 1-16 April, weekends and Bank Holiday only to 21 May, daily 27 May-4 June, weekends only to 16 July, daily 22 July-3 September, weekends only to 17 September.

7 April

P (Sch only) Leadon Roding Village Hall - Sawbridgeworth, Leventhorpe School **Acme**. Service withdrawn.

R (Sch Only) Little Hallingbury, New Barn Lane - Sawbridgeworth, Leventhorpe School **Acme**. Service withdrawn.

16 April

2/3 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station Circular via Staple Tye **Arriva**. Reduced (S only) from every 20 minutes to every 30 minutes.

4 (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue Circular via Jaywick **Hedingham**. Revised timetable.

4 (M-S) Stanway Sainsburys - Hythe Tesco **First Essex**. Revised timetable in early morning and mid-afternoon.

5/A (M-S) Clacton, Pier Avenue Circular via Flatford Drive **Hedingham**. Revised timetable.

6 (M-S) Harlow Bus Station Circular via Little Parndon **Arriva**. Reduced from every 30 minutes to hourly.

6/A/B (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Point Clear **Hedingham**. Revised timetable, most journeys operate as 6B via Peter Bruff Avenue.

7 (M-F) Clacton, Pier Avenue - St Osyth Beach **Hedingham**. Revised timetable, with two journeys each way. An enhanced service, including Saturday and Sunday operation, will operate from 27 May to 3 September.

7 (M-S) Saffron Walden, Station Street - Cambridge, Emmanuel Street **Stagecoach**. Minor timetable revisions.

8 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Old Harlow Post Office **Arriva**. Reduced from every 30 minutes to hourly.

8/A (M-S) Clacton, Pier Avenue Circular via Bockings Elm **Hedingham**. New Service, hourly M-S daytime (8 & 8A operate in opposite directions).

9 (M-S) Harlow Bus Station Circular via Potter Street **Arriva**. Service withdrawn.

16A (Sch only) Old Heath - St Helena School **First Essex**. Afternoon service revised to improve reliability.

22 (Daily) Canvey, Leigh Beck - Basildon Bus Station **First Essex**. Revised route and timetable, with additional early morning and late evening short journeys between Basildon Bus Station and Pitsea Broadway. Rerouted between Basildon and Pitsea via Sandon Road and Long Riding to replace service B5, which is withdrawn.

27 (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Canvey, Leigh Beck **First Essex**. Minor timetable changes to M-F evening short journeys between Benfleet Station and Canvey.

28 (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Basildon Bus Station **First Essex**. Revised timetable, increased to run every 10 minutes on M-F and every 12 minutes on Saturday. No change on Sundays.

59 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Chelmsford, Anglia Ruskin University **Arriva**. Will no longer serve Old Harlow on journeys from Harlow. The road layout means that Old Harlow couldn't be served on journeys to Harlow.

63 (M-S) Colchester, Jump Street - West Mersea, High Street **Hedingham**. Revised timetable. 1634 ex Colchester now terminates at 'The Rose', Peldon.

70/370 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Colchester Bus Station **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-F, with X70 variant added, with one journey each way, which omits Little Waltham, Great Leighs, Coggeshall and Marks Tey Estate.

71/371/372/X71 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Colchester Bus Station **First Essex**. Revised timetable. On M-F most current 71 journeys, which terminate at Witham, are replaced with X71 journeys, to provide 2 bph, between Chelmsford and Colchester. Minor timetable changes on S with an additional X71 each way. X71 journeys omit Boreham & Hatfield Peverel (resulting in a reduced frequency there) and Kelvedon. Section of 71 route from Witham Newland Street to the station and Morrisons / Crittall Road not served by X71 journeys.

74 (Daily) Clacton Pier Avenue - Colchester Head Street **Hedingham**. Revised timetable, with an additional journey on Saturday afternoon and increased frequency on Sunday.

82/A/B (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Colne Engaine, The Green **First Essex**. Revised timetable M-F to improve reliability.

84/784 (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Sudbury Bus Station **Chambers**. Revised timetable.

86 (M-F) Harlow, Templefields Tesco - Waltham Cross Bus Station **Arriva** Service withdrawn. Replaced by 505, see next page.

87 (Daily) Great Horkeley Malvern Way - Brightlingsea Victoria Place **First Essex**. Revised timetable with an 87U designation added to denote short working journeys terminating at / starting from the University of Essex.

95/A (M-S) Maldon Morrisons - Tollesbury Square **Hedingham**. Revised timetable.

97/A/98/A (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Walton-on-the-Naze **Hedingham**. Revised timetable.

97B/99A (Daily) Clacton, Stephenson Road - Walton-on-the-Naze **Hedingham**. Revised timetable.

101 (Sch only) Point Clear - Brightlingsea, Colne School **Hedingham**. Revised timetable.

135 (M-S) Clacton, Pier Avenue Circular via Bockings Elm **Hedingham**. Withdrawn, replaced by 6B and new service 8/A.

136/137 (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue Circular via Clacton Shopping Village **Hedingham**. Revised timetable, with service 136 reduced to operate hourly.

174/175 (M-S) Colchester Bus Station Circular via Fingringhoe **First Essex**. Revised timetable, with alternate buses on 174/175 to provide an overall hourly daytime frequency.

251 (M-S) Waltham Abbey Upshire Shops - Hammond Street Smiths Lane **Arriva**. Revised timetable.

505 (M-S) Harlow, Templefields Tesco - Waltham Cross Bus Station **Vectare**. Currently Saturday only, introduced also on Monday - Friday from Harlow, Templefields Tesco to Waltham Cross Bus Station (an ECC contract) to replace Arriva 86, no changes to the 86 route or timetable. The current Saturday service is unchanged and remains Harlow Bus Station - Waltham Abbey only.

508/509/510 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Stansted Airport Bus Station **Arriva**. Revised timetable, with a reduced frequency on Saturdays.

903 (Sch only) Kelvedon, Railway Tavern - Stanway School **Hedingham**. Rerouted to serve Layer-de-la-Haye.

904 (Sch only) Great Wigborough - Stanway School **Hedingham**. Service withdrawn.

B3 (Daily) Basildon Bus Station - Pitsea Tesco **First Essex**. Minor changes to early morning M-F service, with an additional journey from Pitsea Tesco at 0645

B4 (Daily) Basildon Bus Station - Pitsea Tesco **First Essex**. Revised timetable on Monday to Saturday.

B5 (Daily) Basildon Bus Station - Pitsea Broadway **First Essex**. Service withdrawn, replaced by a revised routing on service 22.

C2 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Broomfield Hospital **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-F off-peak and S all day, with daytime alternate journeys operating to Broomfield Hospital, with others terminating at North Melbourne.

C7 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Galleywood West Lawn **First Essex**. Additional Su journey at 0759 from Galleywood.

C10 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Channels **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-F peak journeys to improve reliability.

S1 (Daily) Highwoods Tesco - Wivenhoe Rail Station **First Essex**. Additional journey 1452 Wivenhoe - Highwoods and revised evening timetable on M-F. Additional 2235 Wivenhoe - Colchester and revised evening service on S. Revised evening service on Su, with additional journeys Highwoods - Colchester.

S2 (Daily) Highwoods Tesco - Stanway Sainsburys **First Essex**. Revised timetable. On M-F additional journeys 0740 Osborne Street - Stanway and 1502 Head Street - Highwoods. On Sunday 2130 from Stanway terminates at Head Street.

S4 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - Greenstead Library **First Essex**. Revised timetable, frequency increased to every 8-10 minutes on M-F and every 10 minutes on S. No change on Su.

S9 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - Rowhedge, Heath Road **First Essex**. Revised timetable M-F, with early morning, late afternoon and evening journeys extended to North Station. On S most evening journeys are also extended to North Station.

X30 (Daily) Stansted Airport Bus Station - Southend Travel Centre **First Essex**. Revised timetable. Additional journey 0620 Southend - Stansted on M-F, various short workings Southend to Chelmsford added and minor timetable changes to most of the timetable. Most journeys from Southend revised to depart earlier on Saturday mornings / early afternoon to improve reliability.

X76 (M-S) Jaywick / Clacton Pier Avenue - Colchester Bus Station **Hedingham**. Revised timetable with 76 variant introduced, serving Little Clacton, Weeley and University of Essex, the X76 operates via the A133 and is renumbered 76X.

Z3 (Daily) Southchurch Arlington Road - Tilbury Amazon **First Essex**. Revised timetable to improve reliability on journeys to Tilbury.

29 April

339 (Certain Days only) Epping Station - Shenfield Station **London Vintage Bus Hire Ltd**. Reintroduction of summer timetable to operate in conjunction with operating days on Epping Ongar Railway.

DaRT Services

Essex County Council are making changes to the demand responsive services in the Uttlesford area from 29 April. The contracts for DaRT 1 and DaRT 2 services are due to expire in April. Both contracts are operated by Essex & Suffolk DaRT (Arrow Taxi Essex Ltd). New bus services introduced in August 2022, detailed in 'A Brave New Network for Uttlesford' in EBM 700, now cover some areas also currently covered by the DaRT services. Because of this overlap ECC are amending the current DaRT services to create a new single service which does not duplicate other services.

DaRT 1 currently covers Arkesden, Berden, Chrishall, Clavering, Elmdon, Farnham, Langley, Littlebury, Manuden, Quendon & Rickling, Strethall, Wenden Lofts and Wicken Bonhunt and operates between 0700 and 1800.

DaRT 2 currently covers Bardfield Saling, Chickney, Great Bardfield, Great Saling, Great Sampford, Lindsell, Little Bardfield, Little Easton, Little Sampford, Radwinter, Tilty, Wimbish, Stebbing and Thaxted and also operates between 0700 and 1800.

The intention is to re-design these services into a single DaRT service which would be numbered 299. This will cover the following areas:

Arkesden, Berden, Chrishall, Clavering, Elmdon, Langley, Littlebury, Manuden, Quendon & Rickling, Strethall, Wenden Lofts, Wicken Bonhunt, Bardfield Saling, Chickney, Great Bardfield, Great Saling, Great Sampford, Lindsell, Little Bardfield, Little Easton, Little Sampford, Tilty, and Thaxted (where access cannot be made to the conventional bus).

The main impacts of creating a new single service will be:

Removal of DaRT 2 from Wimbish - now covered by services 313/314.

Removal of DaRT 2 from Radwinter - now covered by services 319/320/321.

Removal of DaRT 2 from Lindsell - now covered by service 322.

Removal of DaRT 2 from Stebbing - now covered by service 324.

Removal of DaRT 1 from Farnham - passengers would need to contact Uttlesford Community Transport for travel.

Some Additional Information and Commentary on the 16 April First Essex Changes

Following the cuts in April last year, as outlined in EBM 697 Supplement, and the further cuts in October, outlined in EBM 703, it is welcoming to see some growth in services. Of particular note are the following (just a summary, there are many timetable variations).

Route 28 (Southend-Basildon) doubles in frequency on Monday to Friday daytimes, from every 20 minutes to every 10 minutes. On Saturdays the 20 minutes service increases to every 12 minutes.

Route 71 (Chelmsford-Colchester via Witham). The basic half hourly service between Chelmsford and Colchester on Mondays-Fridays, reduced to hourly a year ago, is restored, with most existing 71 journeys (Chelmsford-Witham) extended to Colchester as X71s. However, the downside to this is that the service to Boreham and Hatfield Peverel is reduced from half-hourly to hourly (as the X71 bypasses these) and there is a much reduced service to St Andrew's Church, Boreham and the bifurcation to Witham Station & Morrisons / Crittall Road.. There is also no increase to the Kelvedon service. The Saturday service is basically the same as it was, although with one additional X71 journey each way.

Route 87 (Great Horkesley-Brightlingsea). The service between Great Horkesley and Brightlingsea between approx. 0900 and 1500 (Mondays to Fridays, 1600 Saturdays) was reduced from half-hourly to hourly last October, although there continued to be a half-hourly service between Great Horkesley and the University of Essex. The half-hourly service on Monday to Fridays, but not Saturdays, through to & from Brightlingsea is restored with the shorts to the University extended to & from there. The Saturday short journeys to the University (plus just one such journey on Mondays to Fridays) are renumbered to 87U. Incidentally, a 'U' suffix has not previously been used by First Essex, and is not thought to have been by its predecessor companies. Using a suffix letter is a change to the policy introduced last April where suffix letters were removed from most commercial services that had them.

Routes 174/175 (Colchester Bus Station-Fingringhoe). The number of journeys Mondays to Saturdays is increased from seven to 10. Basically hourly, alternative 174/5s each hour, slightly longer gaps in late afternoon / early evening.

Route C2 (Chelmsford Retail Market-Broomfield Hospital). Between approx. 0900 and 1500 (M-F, 1700 on Saturdays) increased from every 20 minutes to every 15 minutes, but every other journey curtailed at North

Melbourne Morrisons, so the service to the hospital actually decreases to every 30 minutes during these times. At other times the existing basic 20 minute service (full route) is unchanged.

Route S4 (Colchester Bus Station-Greenstead Library). Increased from every 12 minutes on Mondays to Saturdays to every 8-10 minutes on Mondays to Fridays and every 10-12 minutes on Saturdays.

Route S9 (Colchester Bus Station-Rowhedge). On Mondays-Fridays some early morning and late afternoon journeys extended to & from the Bus Station to & from the Railway Station. On Mondays-Saturdays the last three evening journeys each way are also extended thus.

Route X30 (Southend to Stansted Airport). This service has suffered from increasing reliability problems due to traffic congestion. The revised timetable increases the PVR to provide extra resource, for example the former 0900 ex Southend M-F is replaced by an 0840 to Stansted (operated by an additional vehicle) and an 0910 short working to Chelmsford. On Saturdays, some buses will now have a 50 minute stand in Southend (thanks to an increase in the PVR) compared to the previous 12 minutes. The downside is that the easily understood clockface departure times on the hour from each end, seven days a week, has been lost for much of the day.

Also of note is the first replacement of a Shuttles service introduced last April by an Essex Bus service. Route B5 is withdrawn, replaced by a re-routing (over the B5 route) of the 22 (Basildon-Canvey) between Basildon Bus Station and Pitsea Broadway (but there is no reduction to the basic service over the existing 22 route as this is covered by the doubling in frequency of the 28 mentioned above).



Ian Ransom

Enviro 200s AB09 PAN (ex LJ09 KPU), DB09 PAN (ex LJ09 KPR) and YX10 BDY were sold to Tetley Motor Services, Leeds on Monday 13 March 2023. The cherished plates went with these vehicles.

Similar YX10 BFL has passed its MOT and is ready for resale.

Thanks to Adam Barham



Bus Operations of Galleon Travel

Adam Kelleher

Disposals

Solos 1002-1013 all to Shelton Motors for scrap. Not all had gone by early March, see below.

Observations at North Weald Airfield on 4 March 2023

Solos 1003, 1005, 1007, 1013, unnumbered RRZ 5654; Scania CN230UB 1089; Scania N230UD / Scania OmniCity 2007 plus an unidentified Optare Tempo.

Other Vehicle News

Further to the last two months, the only remaining Solo, 1001 (SGZ 2221), continued in service until 30 March. There is still no sign of acquired Enviro 200 GX07 HUU.

Other News

Further to last month, the date that Central Connect moved from Hailes Farm, Roydon to River Way, Harlow was 1 February.

With thanks to Colin Berry, John Card and LOTS.

New Vehicle

621 EU23 BZL Scania N250UD / ADL Enviro 400 MMC H76F, Stephenson's livery. Delivered to Rochford depot in early March and entered service on 16th. As reported in EBM 706, this is the last Scania N250 / ADL to be built for the UK market. It is seen **below** on route 17 at Westcliff Station on 20 March. **Richard Delahoy**

Withdrawn

Solos 320 (YJ56 AUE), 321 (EU07 FVL) and 327 (MX06 BPZ) are all now withdrawn, for sale or scrap.

Acquired Vehicles

Further to previous issues, five of the ex-London United Scania N230UD OmniCities are being kept on fleet and have now been allocated permanent fleet numbers:

- 531 YT09 ZCF, previously temporarily numbered 58
- 532 YR59 FYP, previously temporarily numbered 110
- 533 YR59 FYU, previously temporarily numbered 113
- 534 YT59 DXZ, previously temporarily numbered 106
- 535 identity to be confirmed.

Two which had seen some service here have now been sold to Hornsby Travel, Scunthorpe - YT09 ZCE (57) and YT59 SFF (104). The remaining 20 in dealer stock are all expected to pass to Go North West for use on their franchised bus services in Manchester, being converted to single door before sale. Further to EBM's 706 & 707, YR59 FYO (109) returned from its loan to Border Bus as expected at the beginning of March.

Ticketing

The NIBS fleet converted to new TransMach machines in mid-March, Stephenson's continues to use Ticketer machines.

With thanks to the companies.

Some points from Bill Hiron's talk to the Omnibus Society at the end of March will appear in next month's magazine.



New Vehicles

63465	MC72 UYE	SC5DSRDXU23000108	AU321	B41F	03/23
63466	MC72 UYF	SC5DSRDXU23000109	AU322	B41F	03/23

Wrightbus StreetLite Max DF, Euro VI Daimler engines. Delivered to Hadleigh on 8 March. Despite being delivered after the 1 March change of registration, they have retained their 72 plates.

The body numbers of 63454-63464 are AU310-AU320.

Continuing from EBM 707 with entry into service: 63457 on 20/27 (9 March), 63461 on 20 (28th), 63462 on 28/22 (17th), 63463 on 22/28 (22nd), 63464 on 22 (7th), 63465 on 22/28 (29th), 63466 on Z4 (15th).

Acquired Vehicles

63312	SN65 OLU	SA9DSRXXX15141209	AM395	B41F	10/15	First Hampshire & Dorset
63373	SL16 RBU	SA9DSRXXX16141272	AM739	B41F	05/16	First South Yorkshire
63381	SL16 RCV	SA9DSRXXX16141280	AM747	B41F	05/16	First South Yorkshire
63383	SL16 RCV	SA9DSRXXX16141282	AM749	B41F	05/16	First South Yorkshire

Wrightbus StreetLite Max DF. Collected from Hoeford Depot, First Hampshire & Dorset, on 18 March 2023. In Urban livery. They are currently in storage at Ensignbus, Purfleet.

The short StreetLites acquired from FH&D at the end of February as listed last month were as a direct result of the closure of the First Southampton operation. These acquisitions are as an indirect result; they were made surplus at Hoeford by double-deckers transferred from Southampton. The new to South Yorkshire vehicles transferred to FH&D around August 2019.

Continuing from EBM 707 with entry into service of those acquired in February: repainted 47595 on 9 (15 March), repainted 47597 on C2 (23rd), repainted 47598 on C5/C4 (6th), repainted 47601 on 3 (11th), repainted 47604 on 73A (15th), repainted 47605 on C11/C3 (7th), repainted 47606 on 70 (15th), 47665 on 11 (8th), 47668 on 104 (8th), 47669 on 1A (24th). At time of going to press 47608 was at Mardens and was yet to enter service.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 12 2022/23 (19 February - 25 March)

32068 CR (oos)-Disposal, 32087 CR (oos)-Disposal, 32260 CR (oos)-Disposal, 33546 BN (oos)-BN, 33685 HH-HH (oos), 34459 HH (oos)-HH, 34465 CF (oos)-HH, 36837 CF (oos)-CF, 37034 CR (oos)-CR, 37133 CR (oos)-CR, 37138 CR (oos)-CR, 42930 CF-CF (oos), 42934 CF-CF (oos), 42936 CF (oos)-Disposal, 42937 CF (oos)-Disposal, 42940 CF (oos)-Disposal, 42945 CF (oos)-Disposal, 42956 CF-CF (oos), 44661 CF (oos)-CF, 44908 BN-BN (oos), 44910 BN-BN (oos), 47595 FG-BN, 47596 FG-BN, 47597 FG-CF, 47598 FG-CF, 47599 FG-CF, 47600 FG-CF, 47601 FG-CF, 47602 FG-CF, 47604 FG-CF, 47605 FG-CF, 47606 FG-CF, 47607 FG-CF, 47608 FG-CF (oos), 47648 HH-BN, 47651 HH-BN, 47652 HH-BN, 47657 CR-CF, 47665 FG-CR, 47666 FG-CR, 47668 FG-CR, 47669 FG-CR, 63169 HH-BN, 63170 HH-BN, 63312 FG-PT (oos), 63373 FG-PT (oos), 63381 FG-PT (oos), 63383 FG-PT (oos), 63454 HH (oos)-HH, 63455 HH (oos)-HH, 63456 HH (oos)-HH, 63457 HH (oos)-HH, 63458 HH (oos)-HH, 63459 HH (oos)-HH, 63460 HH (oos)-HH, 63461 New-HH (oos), 63462 New-HH, 63463 New-HH, 63464 New-HH, 63465 New-HH (oos), 63466 New-HH, 64017 CF(DS)-CF (oos), 66760 CF-CF (oos), 66794 CF-CF (oos), 66797 CF-CF (oos), 66801 CR (oos)-Disposal, 66811 CF (oos)-Disposal, 66813 CF-CF (oos), 66863 CR (oos)-CF(DS), 66970 CR (oos)-Disposal, 67736 CR-CF, 67739 CR-CF, 67742 CR-CF, 67779 CR-CF, 69155 FG-CF(DS), 69519 HH-CR, 69520 HH-CR, 69532 CF (oos)-Disposal, 69533 CF (oos)-Disposal, 69903 BN-BN (oos), 69906 BN-BN (oos), 69911 BN-BN (oos), 69912 BN-BN (oos), 69914 BN-BN (oos)

44910, 69903, 69906, 69911, 69912, 69914 into long term reserve. The Volvo Hybrids are expensive to operate, and it would also be expensive to replace their batteries. A decision on their future has yet to be made, but some will remain in service for now. Their high standing capacity is useful on Basildon shuttle routes. But the plan to refurbish them has been cancelled, so 69905 will remain unique in being refurbished.

Acquired 47597-602/604-608, plus 47657 transferred from Colchester, are the first StreetLites to be allocated to Chelmsford.

63169 and 63170, transferred from Hadleigh, are the first long StreetLites to be permanently allocated to Basildon. 64017 has been replaced by acquired 69155.

The transfer of 69519/20 means that all the Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 2 bodied Volvo B7RLEs (69515-20, 11-reg) are now at Colchester.

Further to last month, 44005 was taken out of service for disposal after suffering an engine fire. It is not known if it was repairable, but as early Enviro 200s are next in line for disposal it was not worth repairing it anyway.

Disposals

32068, 32087, 32260, 42936, 42937, 42940, 42945, 66801, 66811, 66970, 69532, 69533 as in EBM 707. 66794, 66797 and 66813 to Shelton Motors for scrap 3 April 2023 (collected by Ensignbus's recovery truck).

Repaints

All the below repainted from Southampton City Red, 47595/6 at TVS, Laindon, the rest at Mardens, Benfleet.

47595 to Essex Bus green livery (before entering service), completed and at Basildon depot on 13 March.

47596 to Essex Bus green livery, completed and at Basildon depot on 30 March.

Both 47595 and 47596 are unusual in having black around the light clusters front and rear, 47596 is also unusual in having a white 'f' symbol below the windscreen.

47597 to red shuttles livery (before entering service), on route C2 on 23 March.

47600 to red shuttles livery, on route C11 on 30 March.

47601 to red shuttles livery (before entering service), on route 3 on 11 March.

47604 to red shuttles livery (before entering service), completed and to Westway depot, Chelmsford on 13 March.

47605 to red shuttles livery (before entering service), completed and at Westway depot, Chelmsford on 6 March.

47606 to red shuttles livery (before entering service), seen at Mardens on 13 March.

47608 was at Mardens on 13 March, then in the paint shop on 5 April. It was not used in service in City Red livery.

Correction to a Correction

We reported in EBM 705 that "StreetLite 47655 and Enviro 200 MMC 67168 at Basildon are others to gain a super rear advert for driver recruitment." In EBM 706 we added the correction "This was partially incorrect, as 47655 is allocated to Colchester". However, the correction itself wasn't accurate either - it is true that 47655 is allocated to Colchester, but the bus with the super rear advert is 47654, which is indeed allocated to Basildon.

Around the Depots

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

Colchester

Services were diverted (as were routes operated by other companies, buses were unable to serve Head Street or the High Street) on 7 March as His Majesty King Charles III and Queen Consort Camilla visited Colchester to confer city status.

News of the Harwich routes (2 March - 5 April). Volvo B7TLs continued to work 0915 Mistley - Colchester 104, with one exception, Volvo B9TL 37133 on 21st. The only double-decker to reach Harwich was Volvo B9TL 37140 on 24th on 1005 Colchester - Harwich 104 and 1135 return. With 67736 and 67742 transferred to Chelmsford, just three Enviro 300s remained at Colchester to work the all-day duties, 67742/750/805. Therefore all six of the Volvo B7RLEs now at CR, 69515-69520, were also used. However, they also work on other routes, principally 371 to Chelmsford, thus 21 different StreetLites have worked through to Harwich on a full all-day duty or part of an all-day duty or on 1905 Colchester - Harwich 104 which remained a StreetLite duty. The StreetLites have included 47421/427/430/697 in shuttles livery and 47665/668 in Southampton City Red livery. The only exception to a StreetLite on 1905 Colchester - Harwich 104 was 67750 on 28th.

Clacton routes. Route 74B has mostly been worked by long StreetLites (no short ones) during the last month. Exceptions have been double deck Volvo / Geminis 32669 (1 April), 32672 (8 April), 32676 (11th), 37135 (18th), 37139 (25th) and 37140 (9th); Enviro 300s 67741 (17th) and 67805 (14th, 23rd); Volvo B7RLEs 69517 (7th) and 69518 (5 April).

Route 76: 69516 (12th), 67742 (19th), 69519 (26th), 67741 (2 April), 67750 & 69518 (7th, Good Friday), 67750 again (9th), 37015 & 69516 (10th, Easter Monday).

City Red livery StreetLite 47665 on 370 (31st). Enviro 300 67805 on 11 (31st).

Hadleigh

Enviro 400 34461 has gained a super rear advert for DotcomBlinds.

Chelmsford

End of the Darts. We weren't quite correct last month in predicting the end of the Darts; as this issue went to press one, 42935, was still in use. The last days in service for the remaining three were 21 March (42930), 25th (42944), 30th (42941). 42941 came to an ignominious end when it failed on route C11 at Arbour Lane Bridge. See photo on page 19. Ironically, 42935 was the next bus on the same route and picked up its passengers (so the passengers were treated to a ride on the last two Darts!).

47644 was on loan from Hadleigh from approx.18 February to approx.14 March for type training of drivers on StreetLites; SLs had not been operated by Chelmsford depot before the recent acquisition of the ex-Southampton ones. According to Bustimes it was used in service on just one day, 2 March on two journeys each way on route 3 (this was not confirmed by any sightings and may just have been test runs, but as acquired StreetLites have also been used on this route, it may be correct).

Another Hadleigh StreetLite, 47527, replaced Chelmsford's 47605 on route 3 on 5 April when the latter had a problem at Hadleigh.

Driver trainer 66863 is back in use, seen at Witham on 23 March.

On 2 April 42930, 42934, 42941, 42944, 42956, 44913, 64017, 66760, 66794, 66813 and 66823 were on the scrap line at Westway.

42930 on X30 shorts (8th). 44914 on 37 (10th). DS66860 seen in South Woodham Ferrers (20th) and Sandon (23rd).

The Prime Minister and Home Secretary visited Chelmsford on 27 March, this photo of them in the Evening Echo (<https://tinyurl.com/yc6uf6db>) has First Essex driver trainer 66848 in the background!

Below: From 30 October last year, daily route C9 was extended through new developments to Beaulieu Rydes, where Enviro 200 MMC 44659 (YX66 WBD) is seen on 12 February 2023. The back of New Hall School is in the background on the right. **David Edwards**



Basildon



Above & Right: Nigel Clark overtook this convoy on the A130 in light rain on the morning of 31 March 2023.

He managed to pull into the lay-by just after the Wickford turn-off to get some photographs as the buses passed by. StreetLite 47596 (SN14 FEV) leads four Volvo 7900 Hybrids on their way from Basildon to Quayside Depot, Colchester, for storage. The hybrids are 69902, 69903, 69906 and 69911 (BV13 ZBD/E/J/R). 47596, back from repaint the previous day (note the white 'f' symbol below the windscreen and the black around the light clusters compared to the photo on the front cover) was then used to return the four hybrid drivers back to Basildon.

Below: Later that day, safely arrived at Quayside, nearest to camera 69906 then 69903, 69911, 69902.

Ryan Hannah



44909 on 9 (31st), X10 shorts (6 April). 44910 on 9 (9th & 10th). City Red liveried 47596 on 100 (9th) and again on 9 April but after repaint, X10 shorts (10th). 67168 (17th), 67194 (25th) on 9. 69901 a very rare hybrid on 552 (9th). 69902 (7th), 69910 (9th) on school route 625. 69907 on 106 (6 April).

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Dave Arnold, Stephen Barham, Jon Collins, David Edwards, Matthew Elsey, John Lidstone, Gareth Norris, John Podgorski, Derek Stebbing, Andrew Toms, Robert West, Bustimes, Bus Lists on the Web, LOTS, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

First Essex News in Pictures

Mini Enviro 200 44909 (YX09 AFY) on route 256 (Basildon - Ramsden Heath) in Billericay High Street on 24 January 2023. The section from Laindon to Billericay is now the last surviving weekdays ex City route using the same route number allocated by Eastern National on takeover of City over 70 years ago, as the truncated 251 only works Sundays and Bank Holidays. The 256 is also a shadow of its former self having only one full return journey just three days a week (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays).

Andrew Sugden

School route 620 (Abridge-Ingatestone) is mainly worked by an Airlink Scania. Here is 36840 (YN69 XYA) ready for the afternoon return journey in Ingatestone High Street on 8 March 2023.

Chris Stewart

First Essex have operated 55 original bodywork Enviro 200s of various lengths, and continue to operate the type, both new and acquired examples. However, the original four, 44516-9, new to Harwich, only lasted five years before moving to First Eastern Counties at Ipswich in June and August 2014. Here is 44518 (YX09 ACZ) turning into Ipswich Old Cattle Market Bus Station on 15 March 2023.

David Moth



66759 (YJ05 VVA) is still numerically the oldest Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban in the First Essex fleet and continues in service whilst others fall by the wayside. But it is gradually getting tatterier, compare this photo with ones of it in EBN 679 and EBM 697. It still has remnants of its previous York fleet name above the doors. Since the photo in EBM 697, taken in April last year, it has moved on to firstly Colchester and now Chelmsford, where it is seen passing the bus station in Duke Street on route 70 to Braintree on 24 March 2023.

Robert Appleton

To mark the new style heading for this column this month, here are the three new First Essex liveries together in one photo. Enviro 200 44467 (YX12 DHE) in Essex Bus green, Scania N250UD / ADL Enviro 400 MMC 36837 (YN69 XXU) in Airlink blue and newly acquired and repainted StreetLite 47601 (SN14 FFE) in shuttles red. Chelmsford Bus Station, 28 March 2023.

Adam Kelleher

The penultimate First Essex Dart. 42941 (WA56 OAO) on its last journey, failed at Arbour Lane Bridge on route C11, as described on page 16, on 30 March 2023.

Andrew Toms



Vehicles in Dealer Stock at the time of the sale to First Bus

Enviro 200s: AY07 CUA, KX07 OOO, HF57 BKN, LK08 DWN, SN08 AAY, AJ58 PZK/L, GV63 HWU/XH/L/M/S/T/W/X

Enviro 400s: LK58 KHC/D/E/F, LK59 DYY/ZB/H/L/M/O/P, LK09 EKR

Tridents: KN04 XJK, WJ55 NLZ

Volvo B7TLs: AU53 HKD, HF04 JWK/L, HF05 HNA/B, LF55 CYV/X, LK53 LZA, YJ06 XLM, YBZ 838

Scania N94s: YV03 PZX/RBF

Scania OmniLinks: YT13 HKZ/Y, YN63 BYP

Scania OmniCity single-deckers: NK56 KHH/J/L/KL, NK07 GJO

Scania OmniCity double-deckers: YR59 FYS/ZE, YT59 SGX/Y

Scania i4: JFZ 7028

Routemaster: SMK 742F

American Buses: MTAMUS, RTABUS

Dealer Stock Movements March 2023

Vehicles In

From **Bath Bus:** Volvo B7 Ayats EU05 VBK

From **Go Ahead London:** Enviro 400s LK57 EIJ, LK08 FLR; Volvo B9TL LK59 FEP

From **Metrolink:** Enviro 400s: LK09 EKP, LK59 DZC/D/E/J

From **Stagecoach East Kent:** Tridents WA04 CTV, GX54 DVB/L; Darts KV53 EZT/NHP, SV53 DDJ, GX04EYT, GX54 DXA/F/FVU, NDZ 3022, KX55 UDB, PX55 EFJ/U/W, SP06 FMZ; Enviro 200 LX58 CCN; Enviro 300 GX58 GKJ; Optare Solos SF04 SKK/N, WA04 TYC, GX54 DXK/O, GX06 JXZ, GN58 NXH/L, GN58 PZE/PXK

From **RATP:** Wrightbus StreetLites SK17 HGU/Y/X/Z/HA/B

From **Stagecoach London:** Enviro 200 LX11 AXO

From **Stagecoach Midlands:** Scania N94s KX04 RCV/Y/Z/DU/V

From **Stagecoach Scotland:** Optare Versas SV60 CCO/X

Vehicles Out

Brighton Horizon: Scania N94 KX04 RCV

Dawsons: Scania OmniCity YR59 FZE, YT59 SGX/Y

Drift Limits, Bovingdon: Volvo B7TL YBZ 838

London Hire: Scania i4 JFZ 7028

McGills: Enviro 400s YX62 BFU/KO/MY/NO

Oddball Trucks, Bristol (exported to France): Enviro 200s GV63 HXF/K

Salvation Army, Hadleigh: Scania OmniCity YR59 FYS

Transpora: Scania OmniLinks YT13 HKY, YN63 BYP

To Shelton Motors for Scrap

Tridents WA04 CTV, GX54 DVB/L

Enviro 300 GX58 GKJ

Darts KV53 EZT/NHP, SV53 DDJ, GX04 EYT, GX54 DXA/F/FVU, NDZ 3022, KX55 UDB, PX55 EFJ/U/W, SP06 FMZ

Enviro 200 LX11 AXO

Solos SF04 SKK/N, WA04 TYC, GX54 DXK/O, GX06 JXZ, GN58 NXH/L, GN58 PZE/XK

With thanks to Karl Griffin.

Sale to First Bus

Further to last month, the sale of Ensignbus to First Bus went through as planned, with the last day of Newman family ownership being Thursday 9 March 2023, as illustrated on page 1.

Unfortunately there was one major error in our report last month for which we apologise, although it was based on the information available at the time as reported on line and in the professional press. Ensignbus has not become part of First Essex, both companies are separate subsidiaries of First Bus. Ensignbus is for now continuing with no change to its livery, fleet name, fleet numbers, routes, timetables or fares. However, there are signs of links between the two companies, with First Essex storing vehicles at Purfleet (see page 14) and inter-availability of tickets between Ensignbus and First Essex. First Essex tickets became valid on Ensignbus services from the first day of First ownership (and from which they could also be purchased from 20 March). From 1 April, a new day ticket that offers unlimited same day bus travel on all First Essex services that start / end in Southend (except X30) and travel on Ensignbus open top bus route 68 was introduced, adult £10, child £6.

Ticket acceptance with First Essex

From Friday 10th March 2023, **Ensignbus** Returns (on common sections), 'Thurrock', 'Thurrock + X80' Day or Period Tickets can be used on the following:

First Essex Route 100 between Lakeside & Socketts Heath & Route 200 between Grays & King Edward Drive.

First Essex Returns (on common sections), Day or Period tickets valid in the zones below can now be used on all services throughout the Ensignbus Thurrock network (excluding X80 service to Bluewater)

- Thurrock Zone
- Basildon Outer Zone
- All Essex County Zone

This will provide passengers with more flexibility over how, when and where they travel.

All tickets should scan as normal on both operators ticket machines.



Ensignbus & **First Essex Bus**

Ensignbus Fleet at time of First Bus Acquisition

The fleet at the time of the change of ownership is listed over the next four pages. Included are vehicle types not previously operated by First Bus before, such as BCI Enterprise & Excellence (as illustrated on last month's front cover) and open top Ayat Bravo Cities. It excludes the heritage fleet previously owned by Ensignbus which is remaining with the Newman family, although some heritage vehicles have been temporarily loaned back to Ensignbus for private hire and film work (see page 26).

For corporate administration purposes, First Bus five-digit fleet numbers have been allocated, but it is the existing Ensignbus numbers that continue to be carried on vehicles.

Each row in the tables on the next four pages from left to right:

Ensignbus fleet number, First Bus fleet number, original registration number (in most cases this remains the same, if it has changed this is noted below the entry), chassis number, body number, seating capacity (in most cases this remains the same, if it has changed this is also noted below the entry), date new.

All vehicles new to Ensignbus except where stated. All vehicles are in blue and silver livery except where stated. A few additional notes are included for some entries.

Volvo B9TL / East Lancs Olympus						
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Body No.	Seating	Date New
120	36099	PO58 NRE	YV3S4L8289A129892	70210	H51/31F	09/08

This is the last of a fleet of 16 with this bodywork. The others were withdrawn between October 2021 and January 2022, this one was kept as a modern 'heritage' vehicle, but remains in everyday service.

Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2						
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Body No.	Seating	Date New
127	36316	LX15 GOK	YV3S4R221EA164926	AJ732	H45/28F	04/15
128	36317	LX15 GOP	YV3S4R22XEA164925	AJ731	H45/28F	04/15
129	36318	LX15 GOU	YV3S4R228EA164924	AJ730	H45/28F	04/15
130	36319	LX15 GPY	YV3S4R22XEA164925	AJ733	H45/28F	04/15
131	36320	LX15 GVE	YV3S4R223EA164927	AJ734	H45/28F	04/15

130 is in gold livery for Ensignbus's 50th anniversary last year, as featured on the front cover of EBM 696 (April 2022).

Alexander Dennis E40D / Enviro 400 MMC						
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Body No.	Seating	Date New
132	34432	YX66 WLH	SFDA11BR2GGX19349	G444/1	H49/37F	01/17

New to Go-Goodwins, Eccles. Acquired by Ensignbus in March 2019. It was re-registered to 772 URB whilst with Go-Goodwins but regained its original registration when acquired by Ensignbus.

Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2						
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Body No.	Seating	Date New
133	36154	BJ11 EAA	YV3S4R129BA148325	AF129	H39/23D	04/11
134	36165	BJ11 EBN	YV3S4R123BA148997	AF140	H39/23D	06/11
135	36158	BJ11 EAG	YV3S4R124BA148524	AF133	H39/23D	04/11
138	36122	BJ11 DTK	YV3S4R126BA147424	AF097	H39/23D	04/11
139	36131	BJ11 DVR	YV3S4R121BA148092	AF106	H39/23D	04/11

New to First Capital, VN36154/65/58/22/31. Acquired by Ensignbus from Tower Transit (same fleet numbers as when with First Capital) 133/4 in June 2019, 135 in November 2020, 138/9 in December 2020. Converted to single door and LED blinds fitted, revised seating capacity H43/28F. They have regained their original First Bus fleet numbers (excluding the VN prefix).

In EBN 680 it was reported that Volvo B9TLs BJ11 DVV and DVW (acquired from Tower Transit in November 2020, new to First Capital) were to replace 976 and 977 in the schools' fleet and that subsequent to schools use they would be converted to single door and join the main fleet, hence they were numbered 136 and 137 rather than in the temporary 900 series. However, they remained dual-door and in TfL red livery throughout their time with Ensignbus. They were eventually converted to single door but after Ensignbus use; as reported in EBM 703, they were sold to First South Yorkshire in October 2022, hence the gap in the fleet numbers above. 136 was illustrated in EBM 696 (April 2022) and 137 in EBN 684 (April 2021).

BCI Excellence					
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Seating	Date New
140	39021	LX17 DZA	6KT6CB112GX000866	H51/27F	06/17
143	39024	LX17 DZD	6KT6CB118GX000869	H51/27F	06/17
144	39025	LX17 DZE	6KT6CB114GX000870	H51/27F	06/17
146	39026	LX17 DZG	6KT6CB118GX000872	H51/27F	06/17
147	39027	LX17 DZH	6KT6CB11XGX000873	H51/27F	06/17
148	39028	LX17 DZJ	6KT6CB111GX000874	H51/27F	06/17
149	39029	LX17 DZK	6KT6CB113GX000875	H51/27F	06/17
150	39030	LX17 GKL	6KT6CB117GX000877	H51/27F	05/17

Chassis numbers are preceded by FBC6108BRZ1, no separate body numbers.

Similar 141, 142 and 151 in this batch were sold to Aintree Coaches in February 2023, April 2022 and October 2022 respectively, as previously reported. See 'Disposals' below re 145.

143 was illustrated on the front cover of last month's issue.

Wrightbus StreetDeck						
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Body No.	Seating	Date New
160	35707	[WJ 1984]	SA9DDRSXN17141001	AP585	H50/20D	09/19
161	35951	LX21 CHH	SA9DDRSXX19141705	AS494	H45/29F	03/21
162	35952	LX21 CHJ	SA9DDRSXX19141706	AS495	H45/29F	03/21
163	35953	LX21 CHK	SA9DDRSXX19141709	AS498	H45/29F	03/21
164	35954	LX21 CHL	SA9DDRSXX19141710	AS499	H45/29F	03/21
165	35955	LX21 CHN	SA9DDRSXX19141713	AS502	H45/29F	03/21
166	35956	LX21 CHO	SA9DDRSXX19141715	AS504	H45/29F	03/21
167	35957	LX21 CHV	SA9DDRSXX19141716	AS505	H45/29F	03/21
168	35693	LX71 AOB	SC5DDRDXXU21000239	AT582	H45/29F	09/21
169	35694	LX71 AOC	SC5DDRDXXU21000240	AT583	H45/29F	09/21
170	35695	LX71 AOD	SC5DDRDXXU21000241	AT584	H45/29F	09/21
171	35696	LX71 AOE	SC5DDRDXXU21000242	AT585	H45/29F	09/21
172	35697	LX71 AOG	SC5DDRDXXU21000243	AT586	H45/29F	09/21
173	35698	LX71 AOH	SC5DDRDXXU21000244	AT587	H45/29F	09/21
174	35699	LX71 AOJ	SC5DDRDXXU21000245	AT588	H45/29F	09/21
175	35700	LX71 AOK	SC5DDRDXXU21000246	AT589	H45/29F	09/21
176	35701	LX71 AOL	SC5DDRDXXU21000247	AT590	H45/29F	09/21
177	35702	LX71 AOM	SC5DDRDXXU21000248	AT591	H45/29F	09/21
178	35703	LX71 AON	SC5DDRDXXU21000249	AT592	H45/29F	09/21
179	35704	LX71 AOO	SC5DDRDXXU21000250	AT593	H45/29F	09/21

180	35705	LX71 AOP	SC5DDRDXXU21000251	AT594	H45/29F	09/21
181	35706	LX71 AOR	SC5DDRDXXU21000252	AT595	H45/29F	09/21
EBS 1972	35322	SK18 TKY	SA9DDRSXX17141327	AP804	H41/22D	07/18

160 was new as a demonstrator to Kowloon Motor Bus, W6S1 with the registration WJ 1984. It returned to Wrightbus and was later acquired by Ensignbus, in June 2021, as part of the deal for their 14 new StreetDecks, 168-181. It has been converted from dual door to single door and re-seated. It has received UK registration LX23 BJK. Unlike UK StreetDecks, it has the Mercedes-Benz OM936 6-cylinder engine instead of the usual 4-cylinder OM934. It was in KMB red and silver livery, but has recently gone to Mardens for repainting. It is expected to be used as a high specification private hire and rail replacement vehicle. New seating capacity not yet known. Note that its Ensignbus fleet number precedes 161, but its First Bus fleet number follows on from 181.

161-167 were ordered by Arriva Yorkshire as SN69 ZXE/ZXD/ZXA/ZWZ/ZWW/ZWT/ZWS but were not delivered to them. They are low height.

143 was illustrated on the front cover EBN 683 (March 2021).

160/8-181 are standard height.

177 was illustrated on the front cover EBM 690 (October 2021).

EBS 1972 was a demonstrator, new to London United, WH45252. It returned to Wrightbus and was then acquired by Ensignbus in April 2021. It has retained TfL all red livery for filming purposes, although it has also been used on school services. More details and a photo were in EBM 688, with a minor clarification in EBM 699.

Dennis Trident / Alexander ALX400						
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Body No.	Seating	Date New
339	32721	T678 KPU	SFD311BR1WGX20224	9823/78	H51/22D	04/99

New to Stagecoach East London, TA78. Later renumbered to 17078. Rebuilt to open top (before purchase by Ensignbus) O51/26F. Re-registered to TSU 639 (also before purchase by Ensignbus). Acquired from Stagecoach East March 2019. Red and silver livery.

Volvo B7L / Ayat Bravo City						
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Body No.	Seating	Date New
369	32698	EU05 BZM	YV3R7G6205A104205	80023	O55/24F	04/05
370	32699	EU05 VBL	YV3R7G6255A106502	80038	O55/24F	07/05
371	32700	EU05 VBO	YV3R7G6235A106725	80045	O55/24F	08/05

New as Bath Bus 372/3 and Guide Friday 376 respectively. Acquired from Bath Bus Company in February 2021. Red and silver livery.

BCI Enterprise						
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Seating	Date New	
402	39041	LX66 GXD	6KT6CC115FX000851	H61/37F	09/16	
403	39042	LX66 GXE	6KT6CC115FX000848	H61/37F	09/16	
404	39043	LX66 GXF	6KT6CC119FX000853	H61/37F	09/16	
405	39051	LX19 EAW	6KT6CC119JX001302	H61/37F	06/19	

406	39052	LX19 EAG	6KT6CC119JX001303	H61/37F	06/19
407	39061	LJ70 FNL	LA9B1LAP2KFFBC178	H59/37F	11/20

Tri axle. Chassis numbers of 402-6 are preceded by FBC6123BRZ2, of 407 by FBC6123BRS7, no separate body numbers. 407 is in a revised 'private hire' livery, still blue and silver but with additional white & different shades of blue. It was illustrated in EBN 681 (albeit in black & white). See 'Disposals' below re 401.

Volvo B5LH / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2						
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Body No.	Seating	Date New
501	39262	EU62 BSV	YV3T1R925CA158160	AH105	H45/26F	11/12
502	39263	EU62 BSY	YV3T1R925CA158126	AH104	H45/26F	11/12
503	39264	EU62 BTF	YV3T1R929CA158162	AH107	H45/26F	11/12
504	39265	EU62 BYM	YV3T1R928DA158638	AH108	H45/26F	11/12
505	39266	EU62 BYR	YV3T1R927CA158161	AH106	H45/26F	11/12
506	39267	EU62 BVD	YV3T1R929DA158616	AH109	H45/26F	11/12

Alexander Dennis E20D / Enviro 200						
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Body No.	Seating	Date New
601	44945	E17 SGN	SFD1L1AR7CGY13409	C239/1	B29F	-
EB 2022	44275	YX61 FZT	SFD7E1AR6BGY32711	B246/5	B31D	02/12

601 was originally a development vehicle, acquired by Ensignbus in May 2021. More details and a photo on page 1 of last month's issue.

EB 2022 was new to First Capital, DMV44275. Acquired from Go Ahead London (SEN34), January 2022. Has been on loan to Nu-Venture, Aylesford, Kent since c April 2022, still there March 2023. However, it is also used for filming and has retained TfL all red livery; on 3 April it appeared in an episode of EastEnders on BBC 1. It has regained its original First Bus fleet number (excluding the DMV prefix).

Alexander Dennis E20D / Enviro 200 MMC						
EB No.	First No.	Registration	Chassis Number	Body No.	Seating	Date New
705	44821	YY18 THK	SFDCL1ER9HGY16681	H276/03	B41F	06/18
706	44822	YY18 THN	SFDCL1ER9HGY16682	H276/04	B41F	06/18
707	44823	YY18 THU	SFDCL1ER9HGY16690	H276/05	B41F	06/18
708	44824	YY18 THV	SFDCL1ER9HGY16692	H276/06	B41F	06/18
709	44825	YY18 THX	SFDCL1ER9HGY16725	H276/07	B41F	06/18
710	44826	YY18 THZ	SFDCL1ER9JGY16726	H276/08	B41F	06/18

New as Dunn, Heanor (trading as 'Your Bus') 1801-6 respectively. Ensignbus acquired these vehicles after Your Bus ceased trading in October 2019.

Disposals

Transbus Enviro 500 368 (68 EB) to the Newman family and not part of the sale to First Bus (but this has been loaned back to Ensignbus, see next page). The vintage fleet has also been retained by the Newman family.

Three other disposals have not previously been reported in EBN/M.

Missing from EBN 679 (November 2020) was that Enviro 200 703 was sold to Go Ahead Ireland in October 2020. BCI Enterprise 401 (LX66 GXC) was involved in a collision with a lorry on the Harwich-bound A120 near Great Bromley on 2 July 2018 and was written off.

BCI Excellence 145 (LX17 DZF) was destroyed by fire sometime around / after September 2019, which is when the last photo of it on Flickr is dated. This bus was illustrated in EBNs 657 (January 2019) and 663 (July 2019).

Long Term Loans

LOTS report that Ensignbus have 14 heritage buses on long-term loan from the Newman family to provide for private hires, as follows.

New to London Transport

RT1499 (KGK 758) - Cravens body, roofbox, green with cream relief.

RT4421 (NXP 775) - red with cream relief

RTL453 (KLB 648) - roofbox, red with cream relief

RM25 (VLT 25), RM54 (LDS 279A, ex-VLT 54) - both red with cream relief.

RM371 (WLT 371) - open top, rear door added when with Lothian, red with gold relief.

RMC1485 (485 CLT) - red with gold relief.

RCL2226 (CUV 226C) - red with gold relief

RML882 (WLT 882), RML2405 (JD 405D), RML 2588 (JD 588D), RML 2734 (SMK 734F) - all are red with cream relief.

RF319 (MLL 956) - in Belfast Corporation livery of dark red with cream relief, fleet number 762, so painted for use in the film 'Belfast'.

Bristol MW / ECW coach 331 (7017 HK) - cream with green relief. This was new to Eastern National as 458, renumbered to 331 in August 1964. It is in EN livery (as illustrated in EBN 699, July 2022).

Reports of sightings of these (or indeed any other) heritage buses in use would be very useful. Until the Newman family find new premises, the whole of the vintage fleet will be remaining at Purfleet.

Open top Enviro 500 368 (68 EB) is also on loan to Ensignbus from the Newman family for Southend route 68.



Bottom of opposite page: Ex- Kowloon Motor Bus Wrightbus StreetDeck 160 (35707) after single door conversion but prior to going to Mardens for repainting seen at Ensignbus, Purfleet on 25 February 2023.
Richard Delahoy

Services

Southend open top service 68 recommenced for the 2023 season on 1 April. The timetable, fares and days of operation are available at southendopentopbus.com. On the first day 371 ran most trips, with 370 covering a lunchtime meal relief rounder. Since then both 369 and on-loan 368 have also been used.

With thanks to Dave Arnold, Jonathan Bale, Richard Delahoy, Alican Harry Reilly, Ben Welsh, Bustimes, Bus Lists on the Web, LOTS and Facebook

Below: The First Essex and Ensignbus combined network.



Colchester

Last month's report on the elimination of 07-registered Enviro 200s was made out of date the day before EBM was published, with the transfer from Gillingham to Colchester of 3988 (GN07 DLV), B38F, on 8 March. It is seen **right** at Highwoods on 29 March.

Right Tuke

Southend's 3761 (YJ08 DZM), a VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsar, was on loan from 20 March but was returned by the 25th.

Southend

Further to EBM's 700/1, Enviro 200 trainer T25 (LJ58 AVB) is still in Southend, noted on 6 March and subsequently.

3761 was on loan to Colchester briefly as noted above.

Right: Optare Versa 4245 (KX13 AUM) on route 9 at Southend Travel Centre on 12 November 2022 with a super rear advert for Essex Police recruitment.

Richard Delahoy

Harlow

Preliminary work on the rebuilding of the bus station has been completed so all bays and parking areas are available again.

Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 3883 has been withdrawn from service.

VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsar 3759, which only transferred from Southend in October last year, but has been out of use since November, and Optare Versa 4181, which was acquired from High Wycombe in January last year but moved to Ware a couple of months later (although was back on loan for a few days in August) have gone to Hardwicks, Barnsley.

3798 is the second VDL to be repainted into green / white / purple Green Line 724 livery.

Cuts due to vehicle shortages continued during March although the return to service of the two 724 liveried VDLs has improved things and substitutions by Enviro 200 MMCs on that route have declined dramatically.

April timetable changes should see the M-F PVR decrease by four with the withdrawal of routes 9 and 86 and the cut in frequency of routes 6 and 8.

With thanks to John Card, Matthew Evans, Tony Higgs, Adam Kelleher, Keith Sadler and LOTS.



Right: In EBM 703 we reported that Enviro 400 MMCs 6500 and 6501 had moved to Tunbridge Wells in exchange for Optare Versas 4233/4. Here is 4234 (KX13 DHD) on route 1 at London Road, Leigh on 27 October 2022.
John G Lidstone



Below: Further road closures for City Fibre cable laying on the A13 resulted in westbound buses being diverted in Westcliff. Arriva and First Essex followed different diversions this time, with Arriva using Milton Road, past the Cliff's Pavilion and up Hamlet Court Road where 3777 (KX09 KDN) is dropping off passengers at the bus stop near the A13 on 20 March 2023. Hamlet Court Road has not seen a regular all-day bus service for many years now. First Essex operated via Victoria Avenue and West Road. **Richard Delahoy**



Acquired Vehicles

A summary of the former Go Ahead North East Scania's which have been reported in previous issues.

461	NK56 KJF	Scania N230UB OmniCity	Ex Go Ahead North East	B41F
462	NK56 KJN	Scania N230UB OmniCity	Ex Go Ahead North East	B41F
463	NK56 KJO	Scania N230UB OmniCity	Ex Go Ahead North East	B41F
464	NK56 KJV	Scania N230UB OmniCity	Ex Go Ahead North East	B41F

462 was the first to enter service in GANE livery with 461 briefly used when the new ECC contracts commenced, which reduced the number of Enviro 200s at Clacton. 463 and 464 were relatively slow into service, but all are now repainted into fleet livery with the new Hedingham & Chambers fleet names. 464 was the last to enter service at Clacton, on 11 March, with the opportunity then taken to repaint 462 which was the final one in GANE livery. These were part of a batch of vehicles delivered to Go Northern and Go Wear Buses in February 2007 numbered 5234 to 5274. These are now dispersed far and wide around the UK with independents as well as within the Go Ahead group, with some now trainers. A few have also been scrapped recently.

Reinstated Vehicle

517 (LX05 EZR) Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Gemini Eclipse has been reported as active again after many months off road. However, this report needs verification as to whether the vehicle is indeed active again or the reports are as a result of an incorrectly assigned ticket machine.

Fleet News

Former Go Ahead London Enviro 200 YX60 FCE, originally thought to be numbered 270, is now reported repainted at Mardens and numbered 274.

The first ex-East Yorkshire Enviro 200 repainted from EY livery into fleet livery with new fleet names is 276 (YX57 BXD).

Enviro 200 297 (SN10 CCZ) in Konectbus livery returned to Konectbus by 22 March along with Enviro 400 641 (LK08 FLL) on loan which was spotted the next day on routes near Dereham.

The Esteem bodied Enviro 200 trainer as described in EBM 707 was spotted in Colchester during March in use, still unnumbered. It is confirmed that Enviro 400 645 (LX57 CJJ) has been converted to a driver trainer for the group and is now numbered 9645.

Service News

A price increase on commercial services came into effect from 1 April 2023 and ECC have also raised fare prices on their contract routes.

With thanks to Robert Appleton, John Podgorski, Daniel Pretty and the Hedingham website.

Right: The departure screens in Clacton have been updated to show the new 'hedingham & chambers' fleet name, as seen on this one in Pier Avenue on 18 March 2023. **Robert Appleton**



Right: Hedingham Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President 573 (W491 WGH) still going strong, in Headgate, Colchester on 17 March 2023.
John Podgorski



Below: Repainted ex Go Northern Scania N230UB / East Lancs OmniCity 464 (NK56 KJV) on route 5 in Pier Avenue on 18 March 2023, showing the new fleet names as described last month.
Robert Appleton



Saint Margaret's Coaches, North Weald

Two Beulas C53F bodied Ivecos were acquired last September ex-Hearns, Harrow Weald, Greater London, registrations LV02 LKA and LV02 LKL. The former has been re-registered to C22 STM.

Sullivan Buses, South Mimms

A further update to route 549 as featured in Andrew Colebourne's letter and photo of Sullivan Buses AE17 in EBM 698 (June 2022). The previous update was in EBM 703. The first instance of Sullivan Buses using a Wrightbus StreetLite on route 549 occurred on 9 March 2023. This was SL90 which temporarily replaced AE17 from 1029 to 1830 for an unknown reason. However, AE17 performed the last return journey from South Woodford at 1830. Other than this the route has recently been exclusively operated by the intended ex-Abellio Enviro 200s AE17-19, except on 14 March when AE20 (DS66 SUL) operated.

Below: SL90 (CP67 SUL) in Chigwell Road heading for Loughton. As can be seen, it did not have appropriate blinds, the number 549 being fashioned from tape stuck inside the windscreen! **Andrew Colebourne**



With thanks to Andrew Colebourne and the PSV Circle.

Rear Cover Captions

Top: SBC Scania N230UD / East Lancs Olympus YN08 OBZ in Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, opposite Broomfield Parade waiting to take up service on a school journey on 21 March 2023. **David Moth**

Bottom: Kevendys Travel (Rayleigh Roadways Ltd) of Wickford operate this 21-year old Neoplan Skyliner. Now registered K16 DYS, it was new to Barfordian Coaches of Bedford as YR02 UOB. The K16 DYS mark was previously on a MAN / Noge single deck coach. It is seen leaving Newbury Park station on Greater Anglia rail replacement on 11 March 2023. **Richard Delahoy**

Stephensons of Essex in Suffolk & Cambridgeshire

Optare Solo 323 (EU07 FVN)
at Market Street in Ely, on
layover prior to working 1550
Ely City Circular 9A.



Scania N94UD / East Lancs
OmniDekka 644 (YN55 NKG)
leaving Drummer Street Bus
Station in Cambridge, working
the 1218 service 12 to
Newmarket via Bottisham. As
per the destination display, this
is the fast service from
Cambridge to Newmarket.
Service 11 via Swaffham Prior,
and Burwell, takes longer.



ADL Enviro 200 462 (YX11 CTO)
at Newmarket 'The
Guineas' Bus Station, prior to
working the 1453 service 112
to Ely via Fordham, Soham and
Stuntney. The bus station in
Newmarket is very small with
just two stands.



All photos taken on 14 March
2023 by **Robert Appleton**

