

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 726 October 2024



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



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726 for EBM 726



Two photos of Eastern National Leyland National 2 1930 (MHJ 726V). **Above:** when three months old, in NBC livery and allocated to Braintree, on route 70 at Braintree Bus Park on 3 August 1980 (rear view of sister 1929 (MHJ 725V) in the background). **Below:** 12 years later, in Colchester Bus Station on route 119 to its then home town of Clacton on 9 October 1992. In overall livery for Clacton Pier but front in 1986 post NBC livery. In between allocation to BE and CN it had been allocated to Bishop's Stortford for just over a year from November 1990 and used at Stansted Airport, hence the flashing orange light added to its roof. Both **Robert Appleton**





Above

Central Connect's new mini Enviro 200 MMC 361 (YY24 HBE) on route 25 to the Brookfield Centre (which was featured in EBM 724) on 23 August 2024. The photo was taken at the southbound bus stop by the Clock Tower in Hoddesdon Town Centre. Behind is the one and only tower block in Hoddesdon which was completed in 1967 as part of the 'Tower Centre' complex. It was very controversial at the time as it was thought that it completely changed the character of the market town. Modernity was 'the thing' in the 1960s with often little respect for the past.

Allan White

Front Cover

And talking of things new in the 1960s, but much more aesthetically pleasing, RMC1510 (510 CLT) was new to London Transport as a Green Line coach in 1962. It passed to London Country with the split of London Transport in 1970 (by then used on bus work) but returned to London Transport, where it became a driver trainer, in 1977. It is not thought to have operated in Essex, although sisters did on route 370 Romford - Tilbury Ferry, and it did spend a period in store at Romford! It was converted to open top in 1989. When London Buses was privatised it was part of Centrewest which was purchased by First Bus in 1997. It occasionally operated in normal service before the withdrawal of Routemasters from TfL services. After this it still made odd appearances on heritage route 9. It moved to First Berkshire in 2013 after First Bus withdrew from London operations. In 2017, it was sold for private preservation and currently resides in the North East. It has recently been on loan to Ensignbus (see page 20) and was used on Sunday 15 September 2024 on the last day of Ensignbus's Southend open top services for this year. (The previous day it had been used on the Bromley Running Day, celebrating 100 years of the garage.)

It is seen on route 68 opposite the Pier. **Richard Delahoy**

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any month, but subscriptions will always run to
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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
available on our website or by post. For any
membership or Data Protection issues please contact
Richard Delahoy, address above.

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 727

Reports to Sub-Editors	19 October
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	25 October
Dispatch by Printers	on or before 2 November

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent
up to 26th 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
officers. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy, but
the Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors
published.

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Group Notices

Welcome to New Members

Peter Green, Leicester - 1230

Sean Keane, St Albans - 1231

Matt Croke, Thorington - 1232

Membership Renewals for 2025

We are pleased to invite you to renew your subscription for 2025. Our costs continue to increase, with further postal increases likely, but we remain conscious of the cost of living pressures faced by many readers. Accordingly, the Committee have decided to raise subs by a modest amount, covering any resultant losses from our reserves, so the rate for 2025 will be £29 for printed copies sent by post and £20 for pdf copies sent by e-mail. Your subscription covers 12 issues of EBM plus the 'Extras' which are generously funded by individual members; we expect to publish two such Extras in 2025.

We have been pleased with the take up of the electronic only membership option and this will continue. Under this option you will receive a pdf copy of the magazine by e-mail as each issue is published, instead of a printed copy. Electronic copies go out on the day that we expect Royal Mail to deliver the physical copies to the rest of the membership, so that everyone gets their EBM at about the same time each month. This option costs £20 for a full year, including the Extras, and will save you having to find space to store printed magazines and will also help anyone with an unreliable postal service. Existing members taking the print version can opt to go onto the electronic system immediately or from January 2025 if you wish, just let me know.

A renewal slip is included in the envelope with this issue for those receiving the magazine by post. If you wish to pay by cheque please return the slip with your payment, but we prefer payment by direct bank transfer as set out on the slip. There's no need to let us know you've paid, we check the bank account daily for payments, but if you do want to transfer to the electronic option, please confirm this by e-mail, to check that we have your correct e-mail address. All members for whom we hold an e-mail address will also receive a renewal reminder by e-mail around the time this issue is published.

Many thanks for your continued support of EBEG and I look forward to receiving your renewal!

Richard Delahoy, Membership Secretary / Treasurer

EBM Extra 7 Distribution

Due to an error by the printers, members who receive the printed version of EBM were sent a second copy of EBM 725 (September 2024) instead of EBM Extra 7, this would have arrived around 23/24 September. After raising this with the printers, Extra 7 was then being printed and should have gone to members around the end of the month (as this issue went to press). Members for whom we hold an e-mail address were notified of this delay on 23 September and we also publicised it on our Facebook page. Members may wish to give the second copy of EBM 725 to another enthusiast, we are always looking to recruit new members! Apologies for any confusion caused.

Group Meetings

These are being held on **Saturday afternoons** at **The Quaker Meeting House**, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2QL, which is a five-ten minute walk from Chelmsford Bus & Railway Stations. Doors open at 1400 for a 1430 start, ending at 1630. There is very limited on-site parking, accessed via Cedar Avenue West, we would ask that you leave these for those less able to walk.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 12 October | Bring your own slides or USB stick. (The previously announced speaker and topic postponed until 11 January.) |
| 9 November | Robert Appleton - Cheshire and North Wales 1984 - 2002. |
| 14 December | Richard Delahoy - 20 years ago. |
| 11 January 2025 | Tony Francis - From Camberwell to Westminster via Reigate. A career in transport and lessons learnt. (Postponed from 12 October.) |

Meetings are being held jointly with our good friends at The Omnibus Society, Eastern & Southern Branch, who are very generously paying for the room hire so entrance is FREE.

The Running Card

Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Saturday 5 October: Classic Vehicle Day, Ipswich Transport Museum. 1100-1600. Includes bus rides of area.

Sunday 6 October: Classic bus running day in Chesham.

Sunday 13 October: Canvey Island Transport Museum. Open Day and Birthday Bash. 1030-1600. The Museum was officially formed in 1979, making it 45 years old. The Bus Garage / Museum building was originally built in 1934, making it 90 years old. The Museum's Bristol K5G, JYW 430, was built in 1944, making it 80 years old. A 1940s-1980s theme. Visiting buses will be attending. Free buses between the Museum and opposite the Monico Bar (half-hourly), only limited blue badge parking on site.

Saturday 19 October: Delaine Twilight Heritage Running Day. Museum open 1330-1900.

Saturday 26 October: Halloween event. East Anglian Transport Museum Carlton Colville. 1500-2000.

Sunday 27 October: Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum, North Hykeham. Local rides of area.

Saturday 2 November: Aldenham Transport Spectacular. Allum House, Allum Lane, Elstree, WD6 3PT 1000-1600. £4 entrance.

Saturday 16 November: Enfield Transport Bazaar. St Stephens Church Hall, Village Road, EN1 2EY. 1100-1430.

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

Bus Trip

A reminder of a forthcoming trip.

Omnibus Society Heritage vehicle tour to Guildford to visit Safeguard Coaches (100 years old this year) and Go-Coach at Swanley, Sunday 20 October 2024. Details in EBM 723.

Book Review

Richard Delahoy

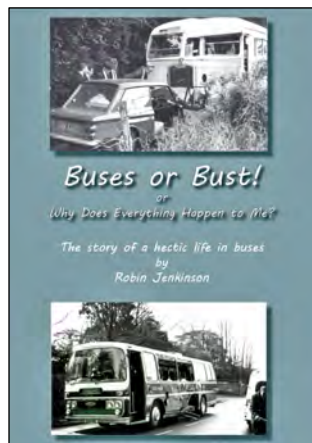
Buses or Bust! Or Why Does Everything Happen to Me?

The story of a hectic life in buses, by Robin Jenkinson (bookvault Publishing, A4, softback, 170 pages, £30).

In EBN 686 (June 2021) we carried an obituary for our former photographic officer Robin Jenkinson, with some outline details of his lifelong involvement with buses. At the time I was aware that he had been working on an autobiography and thankfully his brother Roger has been able to rescue that work and arrange for its publication. And what a fascinating tale Robin tells! He drove part time for no less than 47 different bus companies, acted as an Inspector for 20, and sign wrote countless buses and other commercial vehicles. And then there are his preservation exploits, from being the initial germ of an idea that led to AJN 825 becoming part of the national collection at Clapham Museum in the early 1960s (today in the custody of the AJN 825 Group), he owned 17 buses in all, at least 10 of which survive today. He even set up and ran a bus company.

The book follows a largely chronological order but with various chapters devoted to particular aspects or operators. How can you resist turning to a chapter with the title "Inspecting - the ASBO Years", for example? Each chapter concludes with a selection of relevant photos, most in black & white but some colour, sadly the quality of the reproduction varies, but this is a book you'll buy for the story not the pictures.

The subtitle to the book alludes to Robin's propensity for bad luck and there are some scary tales, indeed the front cover pictures show two such cases - first of one of only two enthusiasts' tours that he organised, when a car crashed head-on into the tour coach on a narrow road, and the other an Osborne's of Tollesbury coach that Robin was driving through Witham when it was hit side on by a lorry that failed to stop at a junction. The damage was so



extensive that the coach had to go to Plaxton at Ware to have the chassis straightened. And how many other bus preservationists have ended up in A&E with a snake bite whilst trying to adjust the brakes on a coach? Sadly that wasn't Robin's only hospitalisation as a result of his preservation efforts. Indeed, reading of Robin's many misfortunes, I'm reminded of the classic line from a song by Buddy Guy and others, "If it wasn't for bad luck, I wouldn't have no luck at all"! (Originally recorded by Albert King in 1967, titled "Born Under a Bad Sign", I prefer Buddy Guy's rendition; other artists to cover it include Cream, Jimi Hendrix, Etta James and Big Mama Thornton - oh and Homer Simpson, but we won't go there!).

The book includes the at times sorry tale of Robin's preservation of a very rare beast - the half-decker JVB 908, with a Mann Egerton body on a Leyland Royal Tiger chassis, which suffered multiple misfortunes. Even Robin's move to place it in the care of the East Anglia Transport Museum was to cause him immense pain, as he recounts candidly. Hopefully one day we will see JVB on display for all to enjoy as a lasting memorial to his dedication and enthusiasm.

Highly recommended! Copies can be bought online at www.tgbbs.co.uk or by post from Roger Jenkinson, 32 Suffolk Road, Canterbury, CT1 1SA, at £35 including postage - please send a cheque payable to R Jenkinson.

Bus Videos

Peter Carr writes:

I have put the Super-8 cine that I took of (mainly) Eastern National buses in Bishop's Stortford, 1975-81, on my YouTube channel (channel title Peter X). The easiest way to access it is to open YouTube and put 'Buses in Bishops Stortford 1975-81' in the Search box. I have 61 transport videos on the channel, of which 53 are of tramways, UK and foreign. In addition to the above, the bus ones are Cambridge Buses 1972-1981 (stills, including ex-Eastern National FLFs); Eastern Counties FLFs at Addenbrookes, 1981 (video, including ex-Eastern National FLFs); Eastbourne Borough Council buses 1980 (video - PD2As, Regents, Atlanteans); Routemasters in East London, 1986 (video); three videos of Routemasters in London in their final year of ordinary service, 2005.

Below: Hedingham & Chambers took over Sudbury - Hadleigh route 90 from Beestons Coaches on 22 July 2024. Scania N230UD / Optare Olympus 873 (PN09 EMV) is seen at Boxford on 31 August. **Mark Lloyd**



Follow Ups

EBM 723: Colchester 120

David Edwards writes:

The 'Colchester 120' article by Richard Delahoy has a picture from the EBEG Collection of Bristol K6A no. 48 (KEV 625) with the caption "... on route 1 to Layer Road in decidedly rural surroundings". [The photo is reproduced **right**.]

I instantly recognised the section of road by the way it curves and rises in the background and can confirm it certainly is far from rural nowadays. The location is Harwich Road, Colchester, at its junction with Hazelton Road (sloping away in the left of the picture). The bus would have just left the then terminus at Parsons Heath making its way towards town and on to the then terminus at Layer Road (as shown on the destination display).

Nowadays route 1 (operated by Arriva) runs from Greenstead to Shrub End (Prettygate) following the same line of route. **Below** is a photo of the same scene as it is now, taken on Tuesday 20 August 2024, with Arriva Colchester Enviro 200 4020 (GN58 BUH) on the same route at the same location. Unfortunately the destination display wasn't captured by the camera. **David Edwards**



EBM 724: Follow Ups

Also on a 'Colchester 120' theme **David** adds:

In the caption to the photo on page 8 of ex Colchester Borough Transport Bristol RELL / ECW 22 (OWC 722M), which is owned by a member of the Stroud RE Group, mention was made of sister vehicle 20 (OWC 720M) which had been illustrated in EBM 690 (October 2021) under restoration by the Tyneside Heritage Vehicles group. 20 is also now in the ownership of the Stroud RE Group, they acquired it from Tyneside Heritage Vehicles who unfortunately have lost their storage facility.

EBM 724: August 1933 Photo of Bishop's Stortford Garage

Allan White writes:

I know the route of service N11 that NS1432 is on very well since we live very near to St Margarets. Those lanes are narrow today so how buses like the one illustrated got through I don't know, but I suppose in 1933 it was only likely to meet the occasional horse and cart. The section from Much Hadham through Widford to St Margarets would have at that time been in competition with the GER Buntingford Branch Line. This only ran from Buntingford to St Margarets where passengers could change to travel on to Liverpool Street or Hertford on the main line. When it closed in 1964 it was replaced by bus route 351 run by London Transport Country Services.

EBM 724: First Essex & Predecessors in Clacton Part 1

Andrew Colebourne writes:

I was pleased to see Robert Appleton's Clacton article.

The picture of VX 5121 is of it in its original condition, not as rebodied by Beadle. The location is Kino Road, Walton, The Naze, next to the Kino cinema.

The picture is actually part of some unfinished research I had started a couple of years ago. Suffice to say that it is by EGP Masterman and the original is held by the Bus Archive, along with some other pictures taken in the area at the same time. I had contacted the Leyland Society about the Titans that Silver Queen had purchased and Mike Sutcliffe kindly responded. I'm sure he will not mind if I pass on what he said about VX 5121:

"The picture of VX 5121 was taken soon after the takeover by Eastern National which took place on 10 July 1931 and it appears to be still in the later Silver Queen livery of, I believe, brown and white (or cream), but with ENOC transfers and fleet number plate". I would add that if it were in EN livery there would be lighter green main panels and darker green relief, but it appears all the panels are the same colour.

Mike also clarified something that puzzled me about these TD1 Titans. The PSV Circle Eastern National Part 1 history PF4 page 28 gives the capacities of VX5121/2 as L24/24R and VX5304/5 as L27/24R. The earlier pair of TD1s supplied in 1929, VX822/3 are given as L27/24RO. The 1930 Titans supplied to EN themselves are given as L24/24R and their 1931 vehicles as L27/24R. Why 24 seats upstairs on the earlier enclosed stair vehicles and 27 on the open stair vehicles and the later enclosed stair buses? His response was:

"The plan was that the Titan body (subsequently called lowbridge) was to be L27/24R with the enclosed staircase but, with the heavier body weight, coupled with heavier batteries for interior lights and an electric starter, it exceeded the overall weight initially, for a short time. Three seats were therefore removed from the upper deck, so it had alternate 3 and 4 seating upstairs. Shortly afterwards, the regulations changed and they reverted to 51 seats".

Regarding the body on Leyland NO 2071 it bears a resemblance to those built for The Great Eastern London Omnibus Company on its Straker Squire buses, possibly by Brush. Silver Queen did use second-hand bodies for many of their early double-deckers, so it is not unlikely that could have been a source.

When Eastern National took over, with some exceptions where numbers were shuffled around, it generally added 100 to the existing Clacton and District / Silver Queen route numbers. The resulting numbers remained much the same for many years. When the Coastline minibuses routes were introduced, the 101 to St Osyth reverted to the Silver Queen number 1, albeit it had been extended to Point Clear in the interim. Some of the interurban routes retained the link for longer; the current 105 (Walton - Colchester) is the direct descendent of the Silver Queen 5, but now following a different route west of Thorpe-le-Soken.

I think the Eastern National Wash Lane, Clacton, depot building mentioned lasted into the 1960s. Does anyone know when it was demolished?

David Edwards adds:

I'm enjoying this article by Robert Appleton with his as always excellent accompanying photographs, but it is two of the photos not taken by him I comment on in regard to locations. The Leyland "A" NO 2071 is indeed in Colchester High Street; Joscelyne's Coffee shop and cafe is in the background with its distinctive front being the identifying feature. I would suggest that the TD1 VX 5121 is at the Walton Kino Road stand with the distinctive brickwork of the amusement arcade next to it [confirming what Andrew wrote].

Paul Bateson writes:

I have just received my copy of Issue 724, August 2024, another well produced and interesting issue.

I was pleased to see my photograph of Southern Vectis Bristol K / ECW EDL 18 at Clacton Bus Station on page 28 but I see that some doubt has arisen over the date. The PSV Circle, of which I have been a member since 1957, is not always correct! I have checked my records and I can confirm that my photograph was indeed taken on 19 June 1963. At this time I was working for Southend Corporation Transport and had a day out to Clacton. I took several pictures in Clacton Bus Station until an Inspector appeared and told me that I was not allowed to take pictures. No problem as I had already captured several photos. Below is another one of these, a quite rare photo of Eastern National Guy Arab II / Strachans 1031 (JVX 556) in Clacton, next to Bristol MW / ECW 464 (201 MHK) with EDL 18 in the background. 1031 had only been acquired with the Moore Bros business in February and was sold in December that year. 464 was renumbered 1306 in August the following year.



Interestingly on the 21st, the date suggested by the PSVC as the first day for EDL 18, I was taking pictures in Ipswich!

EBM 725: Front Cover

Paul Harrison writes:

I purchased Former Eastern National and Thamesway Bristol VR / ECW 3129 (XHK 234X) officially on 10 July 2000 having had to negotiate with First Cymru remotely since May of that year in order to persuade them to make a policy exception by selling a vehicle to a private individual (preservationist) directly. I had to 'bid' for the vehicle, and offer a competitive price which, luckily, was accepted though I did not get the chance to see the vehicle before purchase. With a friend, we collected 3129 from First Cymru's depot in Penlan, Swansea on Saturday 22 July 2000 (see photo on page 10) and drove it back to Essex.

On that day, the first surprise was that it was full of fuel. This was even more of a surprise to the guy in the workshop however, who was miffed to find that the bus had been refuelled when being parked up and taken out of service. After some discussion, we reached an agreement on the cost for the fuel and then we set off.

Our second surprise was that, despite driving really well, somewhere near the Severn Bridge a metal fuel tank strap broke and started dragging on the road issuing forth sparks as we went. My friend, following behind in my car, flashed his lights and I pulled over. After a hasty lash up on the side of the M4, we got going again.

Our third surprise was just how long it took us to get to South Mimms on the M25, such that we had to enact a 'Plan B'. At that time, I was living in Germany and had flown over on the Friday for 'Plan A' - to be able to get an early start on the day of collection and have a chance of catching a flight back to Cologne from Stansted on the Saturday evening. Because it had taken us so long to get to South Mimms, I was never going to catch my flight unless we enacted Plan B which was for me to take the car and head directly for Stansted and for my friend to take the bus back to its intended arrival and storage point in Essex near Crays Hill. So that's what we did and I then didn't see the bus again for quite a few months.

Some may recall that 3129 was not the only significant Eastern National VR that I successfully 'repatriated' to Essex. I also purchased their first in fleet number terms - 3000 (CPU 979G) from Northern Bus in Dinnington - and returned it to the Castle Point (Canvey Island) Transport Museum in February 1997. Even though I eventually realised I had neither the time nor resources to fully restore either of these buses to the 'as new' conditions that I so longed to do and therefore had to sell them on (largely to ensure funding was available to complete my preserved Bristol FLF / ECW Coach 2614 (AVX975G)), I am very pleased to have been able to ensure that both 3000 and 3129 made it back to the county and have remained in preservation here ever since. In both cases, it could so easily have gone other ways as both purchases were not without their challenges at the time!

It was with a heavy heart that, having decided to part with both VRs, 3000 was the first to go in 2007. Luckily, a preservationist buyer was found at Canvey in the form of Gordon Claydon. The bus passed to him as 'The 3000 Group' in November 2007, and this later morphed into The Blackwater Preservation Group. 3000 remained at Canvey for several years after I sold it, and Gordon quickly repainted it into NBC Green and changed the engine at the same time. Eventually, 3000 left Canvey for BPG's storage facility in Bradwell, which is where it now resides. Although 3000's repaint into NBC green was expedient to get it back on the road, my intent had always been to reinstate the front scrolls as they were when new and repaint into the infamous DP livery it carried when (almost) new.

3129 moved from its temporary home in Crays Hill to Canvey Museum a few months after its return, and later was moved for longer term storage to Denyer's yard in Stondon Massey. Despite amassing many parts for its restoration, reluctantly I sold it to Jonnie Brenson (Chelmsford) in June 2016 and the bus was then moved from Denyer's yard to the Brenson yard in Broomfield where, I believe, it remained stored outside until it passed to Bill Hiron in March 2019.

I still feel a strong connection to both 3000 and 3129, not least because both buses were not cheap to buy (just as you'd expect from First Bus and Mr Roberts at Northern Bus), and I spent a small fortune amassing the variety of parts and paying for storage. The experience of restoring 2614 taught me an expensive lesson about bus preservation and the dangers of impulse buying, so it pained me to have to conclude that having acquired them, I couldn't really afford to do the thorough restoration job needed on both, particularly with my spells of working overseas getting in the way. The frame of 3129, in particular, was in need of much work and the guys at the Bus Works quoted me some eye-watering numbers back in 2009 when they took a look at it on a visit to Essex to launch 2614.

The only endpiece I would add is that although I was very sad to part with 3000 and 3129 and let go of my dream to own the last VR alongside the last FLF, it is the FLF that's always been my absolute passion and the one of the three I was determined to restore to original format, despite the challenges. It took 15 years to do, and I have no idea how much it cost - but I am very proud of how it turned out. After all, it is a unique and truly significant vehicle in every way.

Photos Next Page

Top: 3129 in Southend Central Bus Station on 4 January 1988, in NBC livery with a 'Laidlaw' unibus advert, shortly before it was repainted into 1986 post NBC livery as illustrated on last month's front cover (albeit it did not receive 'City Bus' vinyls in 1988). **Richard Delahoy**

Bottom: 3129 being collected from First Cymru's depot in Penlan, Swansea on 22 July 2000. **Paul Harrison**



Above & Below: two photos of 3129, details on previous page.





Allan White adds:

Seeing the photo of XHK 234X on the front cover of EBM 725 reminded me that I had taken a photo (**above**) of sister vehicle XHK 222X in Bristol way back in 1993. Previously with Thamesway (and new to Eastern National) as fleet number 3117, it was by that time with Badgerline in Bristol as their number 5563. The photo was taken in the City Centre of Bristol on 11 May 1993. I would have no doubt seen both vehicles when London Regional Transport route 359 was operated by Thamesway and passed by my office on Tottenham High Road. In fact 3117 was one of the buses on the route during the last week of operation by Thamesway in January 1992.

EBM 725: Inside Front Cover

This featured the recent sale of the former Eastern National / First Essex Harwich Depot. Mention was made of the original Eastern National depot in Kingsway, Dovercourt, which was acquired with the Silver Queen business in 1931. This depot was closed in 1967, and was converted into the Harwich and Dovercourt library. Plans have recently been announced by Essex County Council to refurbish the library. The refurbishment will include a larger mezzanine floor with two new adult community learning classrooms. It is linked to the wider regeneration of the area.

EBM 725: NIBS Buses Takeover of Brentwood

Page 28 featured a photo of a Stephensons Optare Solo, 324 (EU07 FVO), at Brentwood Station, taken on 2 April 2013 on route 72. Although Stephensons continued to operate connected routes 71 & 72 for many years after this, we certainly didn't expect to see a Stephensons Solo on the routes in 2024! However, Stephensons 325 (YJ58 PHO) helped out on the routes during September (from 12th to 19th am; since 19th pm NIBS mini Enviro 200 418 has become the regular vehicle on the routes). 325 is seen at the **top of the next page** parked up at the station between duties on 13th. Unfortunately the front blind timed out just as the photographer was preparing to take the photo, although the side one, 'Brentwood 71' was still on, albeit barely visible with the reflections.

Adam Kelleher

It has been reported that 325 was withdrawn after service on 26 September (leaving 323/6-8 as Solos in the fleet).



Talking of the Brentwood routes, both 61 and 71/72 have had some double deck operation during September. The former has been quite frequent, with a variety of double-deckers used among the more normal single-deckers, the latter just 516 on 11th. Double-deckers on NIBS non-school routes were rare when they first took over Brentwood services in 2019, but nowadays they are very common so it isn't surprising that they have spread to these routes. However, we can't recall double deck operation on the 71/72 before by any previous operators. As for the 61, these are likely to be the first double deck workings to Blackmore since Arriva days, when school time 261s (as the route was previously numbered) had LR Olympians for a while. Going further back in time to 50 years ago, there were five morning and three evening rounders in 1974 operated by Eastern National Bristol FLFs (and once a Bristol LD), plus a couple of shorts. One was late - back c2000 - probably for Ford workers. Odd school journeys numbered 261, Sawyers Hall Lane to Warley Fords, were FLF operated as well. These double deck operations probably ceased later in the decade with the large influx of Leyland Nationals. With thanks to **Chris Stewart**.

EBM Extra 7: Opening of Southend Central Bus Station

To accompany the feature in EBMX 7, here is a traffic poster of the time.

SOUTHEND CENTRAL BUS STATION

The new Southend Central Bus Station will open on Sunday, 19th May, 1974. It is situated between York Road and Heygate Avenue, a few yards from High Street, and a short distance from the Pier.

All services previously terminating at Southend Central Rail Station, Pier Hill and Seaway will terminate instead at Central Bus Station. In addition, Services 6 & 6A (towards Southchurch), 7 & 8 (in both directions), 17 & 24 (towards Temple Sutton), 22, 22A & 22B will serve Central Bus Station. All these services, except 400, 401 & 402, will still stop close to Central Rail Station.

The fares to and from Central Bus Station will be the same as those applicable to Central Rail Station.

W 11/19 1974

This month's report adds further information to recent EBM's.

26 June 2024

SB28 (W only) Stisted Montefiore Institute - Braintree Shopping Village **Braintree Community Transport**. Service withdrawn.

28 July

1 (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Rayleigh Railway Station **Arriva**. Not mentioned in EBM 723 was that the 2340 ex Southend and 0025 ex Rayleigh on M-F were withdrawn.

40 (MWS only) Witham, Ebenezer Close - Witham, Owers Road **Hedingham**. Further to EBM 723, the section of route between Collingwood Road and Owers Road (MW only) was withdrawn when the contract passed from **First Essex** to **Hedingham**.

67 (Th only) Colchester Bus Station - East Mersea, Ivy Lane **First Essex**. Correction to EBM 723, this service is operated commercially, not an ECC contract.

99 (M-F) Dengie Peninsular - Broomfield Hospital **Arrow Taxis**. This service was withdrawn. It is the previous **99A**, renumbered **99**, that is now being operated by **Stephensons**.

306 (Sch only) Wicken Bonhunt Coach & Horses - Bishop's Stortford Schools. Further to EBM 723, this is being operated by **Central Connect** rather than **Flagfinders**.

1 September

250 (Daily) Ipswich, Cardinal Park - Heathrow Terminal 4 **National Express**. Service Withdrawn.

482 (Daily) Ipswich, Cardinal Park - London Victoria Coach Station **National Express**. Service Withdrawn.

X20/320 (Daily) Colchester North Station - Stansted Airport **First Essex**. Revised timetable. At Stanway, revised to operate via Sainsburys, rather than Tollgate Retail Park.

2 September

7 (Daily) Cambridge, Emmanuel Street - Saffron Walden, Station Street **Stagecoach**. Revised timetable, mainly at M-F peaks, due to congestion in Cambridge.

60 (M-F) Braintree Tesco - Sudbury Bus Station **Flagfinders**. NEW SERVICE, four journeys each way, one on Sch Only serves Hedingham School.

97/A/98/A (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Walton-on-the-Naze **Hedingham**. On S the 2150 **98A** is extended from Frinton to Walton. The 2219 from Frinton is replaced by a **97A** at 2230 from Walton to Clacton.

716 (Sch only) Castle Hedingham, The Bell - Colchester Schools **Flagfinders**. Renumbered **826**.

717 (Daily) Ipswich, Cardinal Park - Stansted Airport **National Express**. NEW SERVICE, part replacing **250** and **482**, with eight journeys each way.

901 (Sch only) Mount Bures, Hall Road - Stanway School **Hedingham**. Revised route and timetable.

903 (Sch only) Kelvedon Railway Tavern - Stanway School **Hedingham**. Revised route and timetable.

With thanks to the Omnibus Society.

Right: Recently acquired from Brighton & Hove (details in EBM 722) Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka 832 (YN57 FYC) in Hazleton Road, Colchester on 6 August 2024 on local ECC contract route 14, taken over from First Essex and renumbered from 4 from the contract changes of 28 July 2024. **Mark Lloyd**



Adam Kelleher

Acquired Vehicle

33730 SN12 AMK SFD4DSBRFCGX36854 B452/15 H45/30F 06/12 First Games Transport Enviro 400. Collected from Hilsea depot (First Hampshire & Dorset) on 1 September 2024 and driven to Chelmsford. In Urban livery, but with a super rear advert for Weymouth Sealife Centre. Another of the 100 Enviro 400s new for shuttles for the 2012 London Olympics, First Essex now has 32 of these. Like the others, it went to First Manchester after the Olympics. It was temporarily loaned to Diamond Bus North West in 2019-2020 after their purchase of First's Bolton depot and then to First Hampshire and Dorset (with 'Solent' fleet names) by May 2020.

Vehicle off Loan

In EBM 716 (December 2023) it was reported that StreetLites 47679 (SL15 RVW), 47680 (SL15 RVX) and 47682 (SL15 RWX) were collected from Port Talbot depot, First Cymru, on 26 November 2023, the first two for Hadleigh (to free up other vehicles for additional Amazon work over Christmas), the last one for Colchester. but that these were only temporary loans until they moved to Ipswich in the new year. 47682 was in fact only used for two days before moving to Ipswich where it was in service by 8 December. The other two did not move to Ipswich as intended, but instead went to Colchester early in January 2024. However, on 17 September, 47680 worked the 0720 Harwich - Colchester 104, then finally moved to Ipswich, tracked on services 59, 979, 70, 73 later that day. It soon received Ipswich Reds fleet names (First Cymru red and Ipswich Reds liveries are very similar, although not exactly the same). As at 29 September, 47679 remains at Colchester but has been out of service since 9 Sept.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 5 2024/25 (28 July - 24 August) additional to EBM 725

32669 CR (oos)-Disposal, 37036 CR (oos)-Disposal

Period 6 2024/25 (25 August - 28 September)

32532 CR (oos)-Disposal, 33563 BN (oos)-BN, 33669 CR (oos)-CR, 33686 CR (oos)-CR, 33730 FG-CF, 33750 HH-HH (oos), 33992 BN (oos)-BN, 33994 CF (oos)-CF, 33995 CF (oos)-CF, 37004 CR-CR (oos), 37006 CR-CR (oos), 37020 CR (oos)-Disposal, 37027 CR (oos)-Disposal, 37062 CR (oos)-Disposal, 47461 HH-CR, 47630 HH-CR, 47680 CR (oos)-CR (loan)-FG, 67162 CF-Disposal, 67189 CR-CR (oos)

67189 suffered accident damage in a collision at Lexden on 9 September whilst working the 0500 service X20 journey from Stansted Airport.

Disposals

August 2024: 32669 and 37036.

9 September: 37020 and 37027 towed away from Quayside Depot, Colchester by a Trevor Wigley wrecker.

11 September: 37062 towed away from Quayside Depot, Colchester by a Trevor Wigley wrecker.

23 September: 32532 towed away from Quayside Depot, Colchester by a Trevor Wigley wrecker.

23 September: 67162 destroyed by fire whilst on route 336 at Bicknacre. Thankfully the driver and passengers escaped unharmed. Coincidentally, 67170 from the same batch met the same fate not far away whilst on route 31B at Danbury on 19 March 2021.

Repaints

33657 from Urban livery to new corporate livery following accident repairs at ADL Harlow. Back at Westway Depot, Chelmsford on 25 September 2024. See photo opposite.

33986 from Urban livery with gold relief to new corporate livery, back in service 13 September but without vinyls. This repaint eliminates the ex-First Glasgow gold relief, used for route branding in Glasgow, from the fleet.

67735 from Urban livery to new corporate livery, back in service on 24 September.

67755 from Urban livery to new corporate livery, back in service on 3 September.



Above: 33657 (SN12 ADV) back from repair and repaint at Westway Depot, Chelmsford on the morning of 25 September 2024. Fleet numbers still to be applied. **Jack Benee**

Around the Depots

(All vehicles listed below allocated to relevant depot. All dates September 2024 except where stated.)

First Essex peak vehicle requirement (PVR) figures from 1 September 2024 service changes:

	Mon-Fri Schooldays	Saturdays	Sundays
BN - Basildon	67	56	29
CF - Chelmsford	79	67	31
CR - Colchester	68	53	29
HH - Hadleigh	58	45	26
Totals	272	221	115
Change from June 2024	+4	+4	+1

Chelmsford is broken down to 36 Main, 31 Town, 4 Schools, 8 Airlink (M-F); 33 Main, 26 Town, 8 Airlink (Sat); 14 Main, 12 Town, 5 Airlink (Sun).
Colchester is broken down to 29 Main, 34 Town, 5 Airlink (M-F); 18 Main, 30 Town, 5 Airlink (Sat); 7 Main, 17 Town, 5 Airlink (Sun).
With thanks to Sean Menzies for extracting this data from Bustimes files made available under the BODS (Bus Open Data Service) Regulations. The previous table was in EBM 722 after the 2 June 2024 service changes.

Non Airlink Livered Vehicles on Airlink Routes

We have reported on these for quite some time now, and September reports are under the relevant depot below, but as these are so common we won't continue to do so in future unless it is something less usual. For example, as mentioned last month, there are eight blue buses for eight workings on route X30 so there are bound to be buses in other liveries used on a daily basis. For route X10, there are short workings from Basildon and Wickford to Runwell and these use any available vehicle. A reminder of the vehicles in Airlink livery:
X10 (Basildon): 67191-5 (some of these still have X20 branding)

X20 (Colchester): 34421-3, 67189-90 (67189 currently off road with RTC damage)
X30 (Chelmsford): 34424, 36837-43. Plus 34425-6 in new corporate livery with X30 adverts.

Colchester

News of the Harwich routes (24 August-26 September).

In the four days after Bank Holiday Monday 26 August, double-deckers continued to work 0710 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 0900 return: 37004 (27th), 33669 (28th), 33668 (29th), 32547 (30th). Then with the revised timetable wef 2 September, double-deckers had no fixed duties on 104, but just appeared on a few days: 37054 (2nd), 37037 (5th, 10th), 33681 (9th), 37004 (11th), 33668 & 37136 (both on 12th), 37135 (13th), 37140 and 37613 (26th). They just worked one return from Colchester to Harwich and back, not a full day's duty. For example on 26th, 37140 worked 1552 Colchester Norman Way - Harwich 104 & 1745 return, 1910 Colchester - Mistley 104, and 37613 worked 1720 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1900 Harwich - Colchester 102. In contrast, on Saturday 7th, 33686 worked from 0735 Colchester - Harwich 104 to 1510 Harwich - Colchester 104. On Sunday 8th, 37133 worked two return journeys, 1005 & 1605 Colchester - Harwich 102, returning at 1145 & 1745. The late Saturday journeys on 102 at 2035 ex Colchester, 2215 ex Harwich and 2335 ex Colchester were worked by 37613 on 14th and 37135 on 21st.

Thus Wrightbus StreetLites and Volvo B7RE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urbans 69515 - 69520 remain the mainstay of 102/104. On 17 September, as noted above, 47680 worked 0720 Harwich - Colchester 104, then transferred to First Eastern Counties at Ipswich later in the day. Two StreetLites transferred from Hadleigh to Colchester reached Harwich on 104, 47461 on 23rd, 47630 on 25th. The three ADL Enviro 200 MMCs at Colchester continued to reach Harwich, 67189 & 67190 in between duties on X20: 67189, before its RTC, on 6th, 67190 on 2nd, 12th, 16th, 26th, plus 67197, in black livery, on 27 August, 12, 14, 15, 18, 23, 25 September.

Non Airlink liveried vehicles on X20: 33663, 33669, 33680, 33686, 33687, 33692, 33697, 33713, 33728, 37133, 37140, 37613, 37621, 47679, 47696, 67197, 69516, 69517, 69519.

Single-deckers on route 320: 47483 (2nd), 67190 (2nd), 67197 (31 August), 69519 (30 August).

33733 on school route 694 on its first day since First Essex won the ECC contract from Hedingham (4th).

Chelmsford

Driver Trainer 69148, which had been on loan to First Eastern Counties at Norwich but is now back at Chelmsford (it was seen on the A12 returning from Norwich to Chelmsford on 29 August) has received an 'Eastern Counties' fleet name on the front.

Standard liveried Enviro 400 MMCs on X30: 33994, 33995, 33996, 33997 and 33998 plus Enviro 400s 33705, 33714 and 33730. Also, Enviro 300 67756.

New corporate liveried Enviro 400 MMCs with X30 adverts: 34425 (1st, 4th-5th, 7th-11th, 13th-14th, 17th-19th, 21st, 23rd, 27th), 34426 (30 August, 4th-13th, 17th-21st, 25th).

Double-deckers have started to be used on some evening route 14 journeys in Harlow from the new school term, the bus coming off new school route 621, Ingatstone-Roxwell. Noted in the first week were 34426 (2nd & 3rd), 33705 (4th), 33714 (5th), 33997 (6th). Also Airlink Scania have been used, 36837 (18th), 36838 (23rd) and 36842 (19th), see photo on page 18.

DS69148 (4th) and DS69151 (26th) seen on driver training in Braintree.

Basildon

33425, repaired since last month, on Basildon Pride shuttles (7th).

33415 (12th), 33544 (5th), 33558 (9th), 33563 (20th), 33725 (13th, 25th), 33988 (4th) double-deckers on X10 shorts.

44001 on X10 shorts (27 & 28 August, 3rd). 44909 on 251 (26 August, Bank Holiday, 15th), on X10 shorts (30 August, 11th, 17th, 25th-27th). 63370 a long StreetLite on 251 (15th). 63375 a long StreetLite on 9 (6th).

Airlink liveried 67195 on 9 (23rd).

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Dave Arnold, Stephen Barham, Jack Benée, David Edwards, John Lidstone, John Podgorski, Roger A Smith, Derek Stebbing, Rob Webb, Robert West, Bustimes, Bus Lists on the Web, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

First Essex News in Pictures

StreetLite 47461 (SK63 KKY), in Urban 2 livery with white front, in Bournes Green Chase, Southend, on new commercial service 4 which supplements the ECC 4A on Sundays (details on page 11 of EBM 724) on 1 September 2024. Two days later this vehicle transferred from Hadleigh to Colchester.

Richard Delahoy



Repainted Enviro 400 MMCs.

33984 (SN65 OFZ), with fleet names and stripes, on layover opposite Basildon Bus Station, being passed by sister 33985 (SN65 OGA), on the 200 to Grays, which had returned from repaint on 2 August 2024 and was still devoid of vinyls. 2 September.

Nick Street



In EBM 708 (April 2023) we reported that Enviro 400 34461 (LJ59 LYV) had gained a super rear advert for DotcomBlinds. Not previously illustrated in EBM, it is seen in Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea on route 21 on 10 August 2024 passing Ensignbus BCI Enterprise 406 (LX19 EAG) on special route 99 details of which were in last month's issue. See also page 20.

John G Lidstone



First Essex in Harlow

Midi Enviro 200 44080 (YX58 HVK) on layover at Princess Alexandra Hospital on 19 September 2024.

Allan White



Enviro 200 44596 (EU60 LFS) at Harlow Bus Station on the 1613 14 Harlow Bus Station - Harlow Pinnacles - Harlow Bus Station circular (but showing 'Pinnacles' as the destination) on 12 September. This bus had arrived in Harlow to take up service there on the 1425 19 from Chelmsford Bus Station.

Robert Appleton



On 18 September, Scania N250UD / ADL Enviro 400 MMC 36842 (YN69 XYC) had worked the afternoon school journey on route 621 from Ingatestone to Roxwell then ran light to Harlow to operate three round trips on route 14 before returning to Chelmsford to take up service on route X30 in the evening. It is at Harlow Town Railway Station at 1828, 11 minutes late due to road works that had closed a bus lane.

Owen Woodliffe



For Scrap

Quayside Depot, Colchester, has been having a clear-out recently. Three Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Geminis were removed within three days.

DAF tow truck TW16 LEY removing 37027 (YJ06 XKS) on 9 September 2024.

Derek Stebbing



Volvo tow truck YN58 DBZ removing 37020 (WX55 VJJ) also on 9 September.

Derek Stebbing



Scania tow truck W16 TOW removing 37062 (YJ06 XMP) on 11 September.

David Edwards





Above: EBS1972 (35322, SK18 TKY), the StreetDeck in TfL red used for filming work, in service on route Z2 at Barking Station on 21 August 2024. **Richard Lewis**

BCI Enterprise 406 (LX19 EAG) had its Cadbury's wrap, as illustrated last month and on page 17, removed towards the end of August.

Similar 402 (LX66 GXD) has been repainted to blue and grey with 'Find a bus for every occasion at ensignbushire.com' writing between the decks on both sides.

Further to EBM 720, LOTS report that open top RM371 completed its loan period from The Newman Family Collection in July 2024 and then moved on to Londoner Buses. It was replaced by privately owned (in the North East) RMC1510 (510 CLT).

On the last day of open top services for this year, Sunday 15 September, heritage vehicles Bristol VR / ECW 690 (HKE 690L), Leyland Titan PD3/6 / Northern Counties BUF 426C, with freshly retrimmed lower saloon seats in luxury moquette, and RMC1510 (as illustrated on the front cover) were used alongside the normal vehicles. BUF 426C is seen **right** going under the Pier bridge. **Richard Delahoy**



With thanks to Richard Delahoy, John Lidstone and LOTS.

Vehicles on Loan

Two Wrightbus Gemini double-deckers have been transferred from Thames Travel, both were delivered by tow trucks to Clacton depot, both are currently in dual door configuration:

933	LX06 EAC	Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Gemini	H41/21D	Originally Go Ahead London WVL242
938	LX58 CWG	VDL DB300 / Wrightbus Gemini 2	H41/24D	Originally Go Ahead London WDL1

933 joins sisters 527/8 here which have been converted to single door and have been in use here for several years. 938 is a VDL chassis and was the first of class for London Central as WDL1. It is still in London red, whereas 933 arrived in full Thames Travel livery of light green with blue lower panels.

938 was withdrawn from service with Thames Travel in June 2024 when StreetDecks arrived to replace the older fleet. 933 was working until around the end of July then was stored. There were several other B7TLs displaced by the StreetDecks that have arrived at Thames Travel from within the Go Ahead group.

Withdrawn Vehicle - Status Update

Long term off road Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 470 (EU05 CLJ) returned to service during September.

Significant Allocations

265	HD - CN	by 3 September
296	CN - KN	by 20 August
528	KN - CN	by 20 August
465	CN - HD	by 28 August
587	KN - HD	by week commencing 19 August - operational on service 89 and 16
615	HD - KN	by w/c 9 September, returned to HD by 23 September
640	CN - KN	by w/c 9 September, but failed by 13 September
818	CN - HD	by 5 September, back to KN by 23 September
819	CN - KN	by 9 September
874	KN - SY	by 9 September

Fleet News

Ex Go Ahead North West Enviro 200 249 (LX13 CZC) has returned to service post refurbishment and repaint, working the 9/105 services on 30 August.

Rare working on 5 & 6 September and subsequently was Clacton 818 (YN06 JYC) working the 88 service all day, not often are Scania / OmniDekkas allocated to HD but very rarely used on the 88.

Both on loan vehicles reported above started work on college or Clacton town routes w/c 9 September. 933 has been given fleet number 529 logically following on from the last B7TL / Gemini of the same batch, whereas 938 is referred to on paper as 540. Only their Thames Transit numbers are carried as of mid-September.

Enviro 400 615 (EU07 GVV) worked out of Kelvedon depot following Rail Replacement work the weekend before but has been used on 91/95 services and 70 Stane Retail Park service before returning to Sible Hedingham depot. 470 (EU05 CLJ) has returned to work following repair and new MOT and was seen working the 88 service in Colchester w/c 9 September.

Despite a shaky start, all ex Brighton & Hove Scania OmniDekkas in the 824-832 batch are now regularly in service.

Vehicles long term off road during September: 457/464/465/502/521/524/530/535/806/820/871.

Other News

School service 910 Marks Tey - Honeywood School, Coggeshall was withdrawn from 1 September 2024 and has been replaced by a closed door service. 821, 533 & 534 were loaned to Clacton from Kelvedon for the Clacton Air Show shuttle services in late August. 533 appeared to have stayed on for a longer period as was spotted on the 74 service on 6 September.

With thanks to Dave Arnold, John Podgorski & the Hedingham website.

Company Structure

Following some restructuring, Transport Made Simple Limited is the overall holding company for each of the operating entities, so that business owns Central Connect Transport Limited, Simonds of Botesdale Limited and 75% of Flagfinders (CTB) Limited. Galleon Travel 2009 Limited is then wholly owned by Central Connect Transport Limited. As previously mentioned, Simonds is out of our area so we will only report on this company peripherally.

There is also a new Vectare Ltd entity which is completely separate from the Transport Made Simple holding structure, as the entity and name of Vectare (now involved with arranging home to school transport) are no longer associated with PSV operations.

New Vehicles

Further to last month, E20D / Enviro 400 MMCs 502/3 (YX24 PLU/V) entered service at the end of August 2024. They are H51/33F and are being used on route 20, Ongar - Harlow.

Right: Both at Stansted Depot on 21 August. **Owen Woodliffe**

Below: 503 having just arrived from Ongar on route 20, with the blind set for the return journey, at Harlow Bus Station on 12 September, displaying its prominent 'Transport Made Simple' branding as well as 'Central Connect' fleet names. **Robert Appleton**



Acquired Vehicles

Four former Arriva London Enviro 400s have been acquired for school contracts, 585-8 (LJ59 LYA / LYC / LYG / LYX). They were part of the same batch (and within the same registration series) as First Essex's 34451-65. Since being acquired they have mainly been used on Royston / Bassingbourn schools work. 586 was seen in Cambridge on 14 September. They are likely to have a long term home at Flagfinders and / or Simonds and may be converted to single door at Simonds.

They can be seen in the photo **below** taken at Stansted Depot on 21 August 2024. Also in the photo are former BM Coaches of Hayes (used for British Airways staff shuttles) YUI 5582 (new to Travel London as LJ56 VTN) thought to be on loan, new Enviro 400 MMC 503 (YX24 PLV) and Enviro 200 MMC 344 (JW16 BUS), plus on the left one of the withdrawn Scania N230UD / OmniCities. **Owen Woodliffe**



Although out of our area, for info, further Enviro 400s, new to First London, have been acquired from the London Borough of Redbridge for Simonds: SN11 BSZ / BTE / BTU and SN12 EHC. (These were four out of seven Enviro 400s at Redbridge.) It is possible two of these are in the above photo immediately to the left of 503. SN11 BTE and EHC were seen in Bury St Edmunds on 10 September still in Redbridge livery.

Withdrawn / Disposal

Further to last month, Enviro 200 921 (YX60 DXY) has turned up at Simonds (photographed on service 70 in Bury St Edmunds on 27 September 2024) so is still owned by the TMS group.

Enviro 200 MMC 341 (SF66 ARV) was reported as acquired from Red Rose in EBM 718 (February 2024) but it was only used in service for two days, on 20 & 21 March, before being withdrawn and was disposed of in June. It is thought that it was repainted into new Central Connect livery before entering service, although there is no available photographic evidence to confirm this.

With thanks to Omar Atiallah, John Card, Mark Pitman, Owen Woodliffe, LOTS and the companies.

Top of Next Page: Mercedes-Benz Sprinter / EVM Cityline 201 (RX20 RJV) leaving Loughton Station for Waltham Cross on route 16C on Sunday 15 September 2024, with similar 208 (RX23 TFK) laying over off route 18 on the left. The bus just visible behind 201 is Stagecoach London Enviro 200 36663 (SN17 MMJ) on route 167.

Andrew Colebourne



Above: Details on previous page.

Below: As reported last month, Flagfinders Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka YN53 RYD has moved to sister company Simonds, although this may only be a loan. It is seen in Norwich on 30 August 2024 on the penultimate day of Simonds route 2. From Monday 2 September the route was renumbered 82 on a much improved frequency.

Kevin Smith. Correction to last month: the registration was mistakenly recorded as YRD.





Above: BSIP+ funding for 15 months has enabled part restoration of services withdrawn by Thurrock Council last September. Central Connect Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 220 (RX23 TVD) departed on new route 375 from Grays Bus Station on the third day of operation (4 September 2024) with seven passengers, one large double buggy, one walking frame and two shopping trolleys and, with two more passengers boarding with some difficulty later, the minibus was rather congested! **Owen Woodliffe**

Below: The previous day, the same minibus picks up a solitary passenger at the other end of the route in Horndon-on-the-Hill on the 12 noon journey to Grays. The bunting on the shelter was put up the previous day to celebrate the return of a bus service to the village. It's a shame the bus stop flag wasn't cleaned.

Nick Street



Above: Quite a few unofficial posters were displayed en route. This one is in Horndon-on-the-Hill. **Nick Street**

A banner calling for the reinstatement of previous route 374 was illustrated in EBM 714 (October 2023).

Colchester

3730 (YJ57 BRF), the VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsar transferred from Aylesbury as reported last month, has been withdrawn without entering service here, due to a cracked chassis. Similar 3761 (YJ08 DZM) remains on loan from Southend. There is no further news on the planned introduction of the Mercedes-Benz Citaros here.

4324 (SK68 TWV) was withdrawn on 30 August 2024 and transferred to Northfleet; it was the last Wrightbus StreetLite at Colchester.

Enviro 400 MMC 6530 (YX16 OJA) has been on loan from Southend to Colchester covering for VDL DB300 / Wrightbus Gemini 2 4468 (MX61 AXG) since 22 August. The latter, which had been off road since late June, returned to service on 23 September, but 6530 remained at Colchester as we went to print on 29th.

Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 1009 (BF67 WGD) was noted on service 133 on 8 September and on service 8 on 20th.

Southend

Noted here on 12 September was another Mercedes-Benz Sprinter, 1016 (RX18 LNA) in Arriva Click Watford livery, being used in connection with an internal company promotion for drivers. See above re 3761 and 6530.

Harlow

Acquired Vehicles

T941 (GK52 YVF) DAF SB120 / Wrightbus Cadet 10.8m, B39F, from Arriva The Shires, Luton. Driver Trainer, in reversed old 'cow horns' livery of cream with light and dark blue relief.

Further to last month, Enviro 200 MMC 4106 is in service. Both it and 4108 are in Arriva light blue livery.

Vehicles on Loan

Also further to last month, Enviro 200 MMCs 4084 and 4096 returned from loan at Ware on 15 & 4 September respectively. However, VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsar 3756 and Optare Versa 4184 both went to Ware on 16 September. 3756 returned on 24th. 4184 returned the next day, but only for two days before going back to Ware.

Repaints

VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsar 2s 3772 and 3798 have joined 3771 in being repainted from Green Line livery, which they both only received around 18 months ago, into standard Arriva blue livery. This left 3797 (FL63 DXF), seen **below** leaving Harlow Bus Station for Heathrow Airport on 7 September 2024, as the last one in this livery. Also in view is Central Connect's new Enviro 400 MMC 503 (YX24 PLV) which had entered service four days previously (see page 22). **Nick Street**

With thanks to John Card, Adam Kelleher, John Podgorski, Keith Sadler, Jonathan Thompson and LOTS.



New Vehicles

Further to last month, the final two ADL E40D / Enviro 400 MMCs (804/5) were delivered on 22 August 2024. They, and previously delivered 803, were then registered on 6 September, as EU74 KTP / KTT / KTV and first noted in service from Rochford depot on 10 September. 805 is seen **below** on route 17 at Leigh-on-Sea Station on the first day. **John G Lidstone**

Acquired Vehicles

Also further to last month, two of the ex-Arrow Taxis Mercedes-Benz / EVM Cityline minibuses listed have been taken into stock, AY17 UVM and AY67 PXM. The former was first noted on service 99 on 10 September. Fleet numbers are 201 and 202 respectively. See photos on next page.

Disposals

Scania N230UD / Scania OmniCity 521 (LX08 ECD) has been sold to Borderbus and similar 528 (LX08 ECW) to Suffolk Travel. Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekkas 631/2/8/46 (YN55 NHA/HB/JF/KA) have been sold to Acme. See photo on page 29.

Other Vehicle News

Volvo B9R / Caetano Levante coach 161 (1842 PP, originally FJ61 EVR), which is based at Boreham for an existing school contract, has now acquired Stephenson's fleet names on its base white livery and should be regarded as a transfer from the Galloway fleet.

Galloway National Express Work

Whilst we do not routinely cover Suffolk based Galloway Travel, it is worth reporting that from 1 September 2024 the National Express routes they operate have changed:

Route 250 Ipswich-Heathrow Airport and route 482 Ipswich-Colchester-Stansted-London have ceased and are replaced by 717 which only runs Ipswich-Stansted Airport, with eight trips daily.

Three new coaches are due for the revised service; BV23 ZXK (Scania K410CB6 / Caetano Levante Mk IIIa, new to Edwards Coaches) has been received and two more are due.

Thanks to Dave Arnold, Matthew Evans, John Podgorski, Owen Woodliffe and the companies.





Above: As reported last month, Stephensons have been awarded former Arrow Taxis service 99A, renumbered to 99 and with an amended timetable, on a three month temporary contract starting Wednesday 28 August 2024. Former Arrow AY17 UVM, now 201, is seen on the route outside All Saints Church in Maldon High Street on 16 September 2024, with Arrow branding removed. **Dave Arnold**

Below: The same minibus when with Arrow Taxis, used on the same route, although at the time numbered 99A, going under the Duke Street bridge, Chelmsford on 8 March 2018. In front is the other one taken into the Stephensons fleet, AY67 PXM (now 202) on route 3. **Adam Kelleher**





Above: Also on route 99, Enviro 200 429 (YX17 NYZ) turning into Oak Farm Road, Woodham Walter, on the morning of 3 September 2024, going to Broomfield Hospital but unfortunately showing the blind for the other direction. **Dave Arnold.** This vehicle was acquired in October 2023. A photo of it in all white, taken on 31 January this year, was in EBM 718 (February 2024), it received fleet livery by early April.

Below: Five Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekkas, new as London Sovereign / London United SLE class, parked at Acme's Saffron Walden base on Shire Hill Industrial Estate on 25 August 2024, including YN55 NKK and NHA, two of four recent purchases from Stephenson's (fleet numbers 646, 631 respectively). **Owen Woodliffe**



To complete the story of the buses working route 549 in EBM 725, 36298 moved over to route 323 on the afternoon of 28 August 2024 and was replaced on the 549 by 36037. This time 36037 did not display proper blinds but only had the route number in the windscreen. However, this was in the proper TfL route number blind format, white on black. The rear route number box no longer displayed the 593 number as seen in the photo on the inside rear cover of EBM 725. This turned out to be the last appearance of 36037 on the route, 36298 returning on the following day and that bus continued to be the regular vehicle. However, it eloped again to the 323 late in the morning of 4 September. This time it was replaced by similar 36261 (LX11AVP), which also did not have proper blinds and displayed the same windscreen board as seen on 36037. 36261 appeared from then on each day until the last, Friday 6 September. The possible reason for 36298 being used in preference on the 323, normally operated by electric BYD / Enviro 200 vehicles, was the blind set that it was equipped with could show that route.

Both 36261 and 36298 were transferred to Walthamstow Avenue (AW) garage on the night of 6-7 September for use on route W19, which was affected by the reallocations associated with the reconfiguration of the W12 to W14 routes and resulting withdrawal of the 549. The shorter Enviro 200 buses previously used on the W19 from AW moved across to the revised W12 (Woodford Bridge - Walthamstow) pending receipt of new electric Enviro 100EV buses. However, as AW also runs route 397, it remains a possibility that these two buses might reappear in Loughton substituting for buses on that route.

The revised W13 (Woodford Wells - Leyton) and W14 (Loughton - Whipps Cross) were now operated by Lea Interchange (LI) garage, using buses previously allocated to the W14 from that garage. This was again pending receipt of new electric vehicles, in this case Volvo BZL single deckers.

The Trueform crew were out on Thursday 5 September changing the E-tiles on bus stop flags. I happened on them working south on route 549 during the afternoon. This did not include replacing any of the other out-of-date E-tiles in Loughton, but the stray 542 E-tile in the photo on page 31 of EBM 725 was replaced with a W14 one. The work did not include replacing the route 549 timetable panels, which I observed still in place on 15 September. However, the 804 timetable in the photo was removed sometime between 7 and 15 September, the latter date my last visit to Loughton before writing this article.

In last month's article I noted that Enviro 400H City 12538 (SN65 OHP) had moved from Ash Grove (HK) to Walthamstow Avenue (AW) for route 20, being the first such earlier vehicle to appear on the route during 2024. What I did not realise was that it had replaced electric Enviro 400EV City 84173 (LG21 HZM) which was reallocated to Plumstead (PD) to bolster the allocation of similar vehicles there. As anticipated, the operation of route 20 was moved to Leyton (T) garage on 31 August. At the same time, the other electric Enviro 400EV City 84174 (LG21 HZN) was substituted by hybrid 12523 (SN66 WRG) from HK and was moved to PD, entering service there on the 6 August.

Leyton did indeed start allocating other Enviro 400H vehicles to the 20 almost straight away, with 12150 (LX61 DCV) appearing on 2 September. Conversely it seemed that Leyton wanted to try out the Enviro 400H City vehicles on each of its other routes. 12541 (YX19 ORS) was used on route 257 on its first day at Leyton and I was travelling on newly allocated 12523 on route 20 when it met up with 12541 at Whipps Cross and then followed it to the garage. Unfortunately it then went into the garage and stubbornly refused to come out again, so I didn't get a good picture, only one of it lurking in the shadows!

The reallocation has allowed Enviro 400H City vehicles to appear on the other route serving Essex that is operated by Leyton, the 275. The first was the former demonstrator 12538 on 2 September. I hadn't noticed that others had appeared until writing this, but London Vehicle Finder records 12540/3/5-7 (YX19 ORP/U/W/Y/Z) appearing since. On 21 September, another ex-route 20 Enviro 400 City on the 275 was 12548 (E17 HCT) - its first time on the route and the first of the two HCT-registered buses.

Conventional Enviro 400H vehicles have appeared on route 20 in ones and twos most days since, but 9 September was notable for seeing four out of ten buses used. They were 12149/50/52/53 (LX61 DCU/V/Z/DDA). The only other one to appear so far is 12151 (LX61 DCY), which suggests that these five vehicles have been equipped with new blinds including route 20. Leyton also has Enviro 400H MMC vehicles and it remains to be seen whether any

will appear on the 20. Unlike AW, Leyton displays duty numbers in the windscreens of its buses so the vehicles on route 20 start displaying the numbers 21 upwards.

However, on 6 September I photographed 12152 in Debden (right) displaying the number 182, which does not seem to relate to any of the sequences for the routes allocated there. If anyone can enlighten me why, I would be grateful.



The hiatus in electric buses serving Loughton was to last for one week. The first Volvo BZL / MCV to work the revised W14 was 66030 (LJ24 ZKH) on the first day, 7 September, but only from about 2220 in the evening. It has since transpired that the late evening working regularly sees these buses, daytime duties almost exclusively being in the hands of diesel buses. The first daytime working occurred on Sunday 15 September when 66035 (LJ24 ZKM) worked the route in the morning, followed by 66032 (LF73 DYB) in the afternoon. Diesels were in charge from 1645 and also covered the late evening duty on that day. **Below:** 66032 turning from the High Road into Old Station Road at Loughton on 15 September 2024. Photographers will be relieved to know that these have high frequency destination displays, so taking pictures of moving buses is not a problem. **Andrew Colebourne**

Out of interest, Lea Interchange also has Volvo BZL / MCV double-deckers that have covered the route W13 school workings from the first school day since the changes, with one also in service on Saturday 14 September. However, the W13 does not reach the Essex border.



During the school holidays from 22 July to 3 September 2024, the three Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekkas 60/61/62 (PJ54 YZT/U/V) remained licensed, but they only worked occasionally on the three all day duties on Ipswich - Manningtree 92 and Ipswich - Colchester 93/A. Instead, the newer, ex Metroliner Scania OmniCities, dating from 2011, fleet numbers 30 to 45, worked most duties.

The school holidays at Ipswich School started earlier, on 8 July, so the ex RATP London United Scania OmniCities fitted with seatbelts also worked occasionally on 92/93:

On Ipswich - Colchester 93/A: 47 (SGZ 3347) on 13 July, 51 (SGZ 3351) on 31 July, 49 (SGZ 3349) on 1 Aug. On Ipswich - Manningtree 92: 48 (SGZ 3348) on 25 July, 51 (SGZ 3351) on 22 August.

On 25 July, the sole Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban in the fleet, 161 (SN57 DCX), worked 1225 & 1425 Ipswich - Manningtree 92, returning from Manningtree at 1320 & 1520.

On 12 August, Scania OmniCity 29 (YR59 FYT), in the 120 years anniversary livery, as illustrated in EBM 719, worked 1150 & 1500 Ipswich - Colchester 93, returning at 1315 & 1635 from Colchester.

There are additional evening peak journeys at 1645 Ipswich - Colchester 93 & 1810 return, worked by an ADL Enviro 200 off Shotley - Ipswich 97. This duty was also worked by seatbelt fitted Enviro 200s not required on Ipswich School contracts: 74 (DU60 LOJ) on 26, 29, 30 July, 9, 20, 21, 29 August; 76 (LX58 LML) on 27 July, 16 August.

Service 92 also has additional evening peak journeys at 1740 Ipswich - Manningtree & 1830 return. This is worked by an ex Metroliner Scania OmniCity off school services during school terms, but during the school holidays a variety of other buses were used, including ex RATP Scania OmniCities, Scania / EL OmniDekkas, Enviro 200s, Optare Tempo SR 99 (YJ12 GWU) with 13 route branding and Mercedes Citaro 155 (BF65 HVV).

On Saturdays, services 92/93 are often worked by a mixture of OmniCities and Enviro 200s. The 1635 Ipswich - Manningtree 92 & 1730 return is worked by an Enviro 200 off service 8 Asda - Anglia Retail Park - Whitehouse Estate - Tower Ramparts. Thus it is usually an Enviro 200 with route 8 'Whitehouse's Own' branding, as seen **below**, 106 (YX66 WCK) on 20 July 2024, turning from Colchester Road into Station Road, Manningtree. **David Moth**





Mini ADL Enviro 200s KX08 HMF (July 2024) and LJ57 USU (August) have been sold to Avondale Coaches, Clydebank. Both are former Central Connect vehicles and are now in Avondale's livery of red with a black skirt.

With thanks to Adam Barham.

Other Operators

Roger A Smith

Acme, Saffron Walden

As noted and illustrated above, four Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekkas, YN55 NHA/HB/JF/KA, have been acquired from Stephensons.

Don's, Great Dunmow

PN09 ELJ, PN09 EMJ and PNO9 ENJ, all Scania N230UDs with Optare Olympus H51/29F bodies, are here from Sanders, Holt, Norfolk.

Kevenly, Wickford

Neoplan C51FT K6 TDT (ex P063 FMY) is here from Milestone Coaches, Canvey Island.

Middleton (Marc 1 Travel), Billericay

ASZ 5437 (ex PE55 WLH), a Scania K114EB4 with Berkoff C57FT body, is here from Baker, Harthill, Scotland.

REL Capital

Coach industry investor REL Capital has completed further operator purchases with deals for Essex businesses Klarners Coaches, Colchester and Tendring Travel, Thorpe-le-Soken. Earlier this year it bought Lewis Coaches of London, Advance Minibuses of Rayleigh, and KB Coaches of Wickford, as reported in EBM 721. Previous acquisitions were reported in earlier EBMs.

At Tendring Travel, renamed REL Tendring, REL has agreed an investment that sees it take a majority shareholding in the business. Tendring Travel has around 20 coaches that it operates on school contracts in the Clacton-on-Sea, Colchester and Ipswich areas. Photos of Tendring Travel vehicles have been in EBN/Ms 683/4 & 713.

At Klarners, Managing Director Graham Klarner will retire after a handover period. Klarners work includes tours, private hire, and rail replacement. Photos of Klarners vehicles have been in EBN/Ms 681/3/7.

REL Davian, Rayleigh

Brand new here are AA24 REL and AB24 REL, a pair of MCV bodied Volvo B8Rs.

St. Margarets Coaches, Harlow

SN15 CAU, a Mercedes-Benz 1524L with C41F body by UNVI, is here from Davies, Hereford.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy, Ian Ransom, the PSV Circle and Route One magazine.

Rear Cover Captions - Central Connect and London Buses

Top: Central Connect mini Enviro 200 MMC 358 (YY24 HBB) on route 17 and Stagecoach London 12523 (SN66 WRG) on route 20 in Burton Road, Debden on 6 September 2024.

Bottom: 217 and 2217 together! RM2217 (CUV 217C), the last standard length Routemaster built, was previously part of the Arriva Heritage fleet but is now owned by the London Bus Company, still in Arriva livery, seen on route 20B at Loughton Station on the Epping Ongar Railway 'Only Routemasters' event on Sunday 25 August 2024. Behind it is Central Connect (in Vectare livery) Mercedes-Benz Sprinter / EVM Cityline 217 (RX23 TUV) displaying route 16 to Waltham Cross. It should have shown 16C as the 16 doesn't run on Sundays or reach Loughton. See page 24 for a photo of a similar minibus showing the correct route number. Both **Andrew Colebourne**



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