

Essex Bus News

Issue 682 February 2021



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



fb.me/essexbus



Essex Bus News the monthly magazine of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

Issue 682 February 2021



Above and Front Cover: 'The Beast from the East 2' (after the first one in 2018) hit Essex on Sunday 7 February 2021. On the front cover is NIBS Enviro 200 444 on route 256 on the 9th, at Sun Corner, Billericay, on the same stretch of road as the Bristol FLF and LD illustrated on route 251 sixty-odd years earlier on page 31 of EBN 680 (which incorrectly stated buses no longer served this stretch, but this was corrected in EBN 681). **Steven Quy.** Above: Panther Travel's Mercedes Sprinter / KVC conversion DB54 PAN on route suitability tests to run bus services in Dedham in the snow, in the High Street by the memorial on 8th. **Adam Barham**
There are a number of recent photos of buses in the snow (plus two not so recent) in this month's issue.

Inside front cover top: In EBN 681 it was reported that Lodge have acquired YJ07 VTA, an Optare Solo M950SL, and that it had been repainted into their livery and was due into service from 14 December 2020. Here it is near Chelmsford Railway Station on 17 December. **Jaiden Buck Auld**

Inside front cover bottom: East Kent MFN 946F at Rayleigh Station on 10 March 1977. **Richard Delahoy.** See articles on pages 22-24 for the reason it was there. The photo on the right provides a clue!

Editor's Note

Not so much news this month due to lockdown, so a bit more history and some photo features. Talking of the latter, reviewing my first four issues as editor, it occurred to me that I could make better use of the centre pages. So, from this edition, there is a new double-page spread themed photo feature, which will be included in future when space allows. Any submissions of photos on a theme for future use would be very welcome.



Group Information

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

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

Editorial Team

Editor & First Essex and Central Connect

Adam Kelleher
74 Park Road
Brentwood, Essex
CM14 4TU
adamxxx4@yahoo.co.uk

Arriva: Colchester, Harlow & Southend

Peter Mansbridge
petemans_1@hotmail.com

Ensignbus and Hedingham & Chambers

Mark Lloyd
448 Ipswich Road
Colchester, Essex CO4 4EY
lloydhousehold448@gmail.com

Panther Travel, Lodges 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

Service Changes

Paul Harvey
3 Orangewood Close
Gonerby Hill Foot
Grantham NG31 8QW
pw.harvey@ntiworld.com

Ipswich Buses in Essex

Robert Appleton, rcappleton29@gmail.com

Vectare

Chris Stewart, shenfield252@gmail.com

Missing or Defective EBNs

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.

Subscriptions

A calendar year subscription is £22. New members may join from
any month, but subscriptions will always run to December from
whichever month the member chooses. Those joining from
February to December inclusive will pay a pro-rata subscription
calculated at £2 per month. For example, a member joining in
March would pay £10 x £2, i.e., £20. Please contact Richard
Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road, Southend-on-Sea SS1 3TT
richard.delahoy@blueyonder.co.uk

Membership Records & Data Protection

A statement of our compliance with 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.

Printed by

Directcds Ltd, Unit 2, Gentlemans Field, Westmill Road, Ware,
Hertfordshire SG12 0EF, 01920 465023
www.directcds.co.uk

Target Dates for EBN 683

Reports to Sub-Editors	6 March
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	12 March
Dispatch by Printers	on or before 22 March

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 12th
and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the
next month.

Views expressed in EBN do not necessarily reflect the opinions
of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group or members of its
Committee. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy, but the
Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors published.

© Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group 2021

www.essexbus.org.uk

fb.me/essexbus

Group Notices

Membership News

Welcome to New Member:

Jonathan Thompson, Southend on Sea - 1179

We are very sorry to report the death of member 613, Terry Clark of Witham, and offer our condolences to his friends and family (also see pages 10 & 23).

New Committee Members

Ian Ransom, Chair, writes:

On behalf of the committee and members, I'm delighted to announce the following additions to the committee of EBEG:

Adam Kelleher - EBN Editor

Wayne Bell - Tours Organiser

Although the committee were not able to meet in 2020 due to Covid restrictions, we hope that as things change, we will be able to in 2021. Both Adam and Wayne have a wealth of knowledge and ideas and make welcome additions to the committee.

Please join me in welcoming them both to the committee.

eBay Sales - Can You Help?

The Group has for the past few years advertised books, photos, leaflets and timetables for sale through eBay, raising a modest but useful amount for Group funds. With the lack of physical sales events such as rallies and meetings at present, we want to focus more on eBay sales but need help. The person handling sales at present has very limited time and we are looking for a volunteer amongst our membership who could help. It would be useful to have had some experience of using eBay, either as a buyer or seller, or both. You will need a scanner (ideally) or digital camera / phone to capture images of the items for sale. The role then involves creating the listings, processing sales, packing and posting them. All payments come to our PayPal account so you would not need to be involved in that. We will of course reimburse expenses for post and packing.

Is this something you could help with? We've recently acquired a large collection of photos that need listing over time, plus we have stocks of leaflets, etc. that could also be offered on eBay.

If you are interested, please contact Richard Delahoy in the first instance - details on page 2.

Corrections to & Additional Information on Photo Captions in EBN 681

The photo of FJ13 EBN on page 4 was taken on 2 January 2021, not 2020. The photo of 32532 on page 10 was taken at Pitsea Broadway (outside McDonalds), not Pitsea Tesco. To add to the caption on page 1 re the cover photo, ex Hedingham L414, W834 NNI, is still in as acquired (by Hedingham) Brighton & Hove livery. The photo of 2379 on the inside front cover was taken at Prittlewell Works.

Martin Weyell advises that the coach in the photo is FPT 661G, new to Scurr of Stillington, County Durham, to Watts, Benfleet September 1972, moved to Leigh-on-Sea July 1977 and to an unknown owner for conversion to a caravan November 1977.

Books & Magazines Available

Colin Sigston has kindly made some books and magazines available. He writes: "I have a large number of books and magazines which came via my brother from the estate of a deceased enthusiast in Kent. They were published 1983-2003 and include Buses Yearbooks, four books relating to Kent, one with a complete fleet list of Maidstone & District 1911-1995, and a number of preservation magazines. All are in very good condition and are offered to anyone for a donation to charity. Contact me at colin.sigston@gmail.com for a full list."



Above: Spotted on Arriva Southend Dart 1565 on 12 January was this display, alternating with the correct details for route 6. It appeared to be the only bus with this particular display. **Richard Delahoy**. A photo showing more of this bus is on page 11.

Book Review

Westcliff & City Fleet History

Review by Richard Delahoy

PSV Circle ISBN 978-1-913879-01-3, A5, 128 pp, plus 8 pp of photos (39 b & w photos), softback
£16 from www.psvcircle.org.uk/ (go to Fleet Histories, Eastern Traffic Area) or from The PSV Circle, 4th Floor, Crown House, Linton Road, Barking, IG11 8HG.

Last month we mentioned the long-awaited publication of this new PSV Circle fleet history. Westcliff Motor Services was one of the lesser-known Tilling Group companies but was a significant force in South Essex, indeed in the period 1952-54, it was as large in vehicle terms and bigger by revenue than Eastern National (after the latter had lost its Midlands Area operations to United Counties and Grays to London Transport), until merged into EN with effect from 1 January 1955. Therefore, this fleet history is a very welcome addition to the Circle's collection and also updates their earlier work on the famed City Coach Company.

With a history dating back to 1914 (when the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Charabanc Co Ltd was formed) and even earlier in its predecessors, tracing details of the earliest buses and coaches is challenging and will never be wholly complete, given the paucity of records from that era and contradictions in the records that have survived. We owe a huge debt to our late member John Taylor, who sadly passed away just as this book was published and who may never have seen the final product, for his diligent work over very many years, researching source documents such as local council motor taxation records. Of course, others contributed as well, but the book would have been much poorer without John's work. I know he thought there were still more corrections to be added, but I understand why the Circle didn't want to delay publication further; a work like this will never be totally finished. It remains to be seen what the as yet unsorted records in the Derek Giles collection at The Bus Archive will add to the story; I'm slowly working my way through them, when the pandemic allows (which it certainly doesn't at present!). Fellow Group member Brian Ashley and I had been compiling our own list of Westcliff buses for the past few years, building on research by another EBEG stalwart and former Managing Editor of EBN, the late Peter Snell, and it's interesting to see how many early second-hand buses that the Circle has identified that we were previously unaware of.

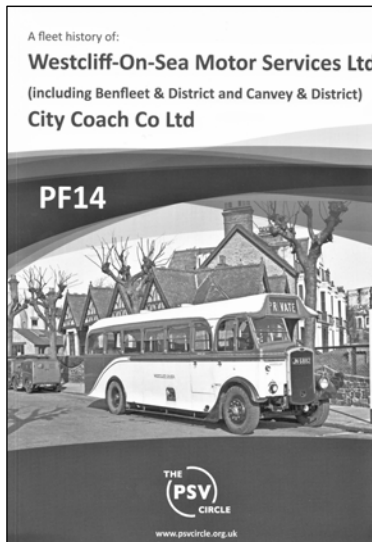
The format of the book follows the usual Circle style, with a brief company history and then lists of every vehicle known to have been operated, identifying former and subsequent owners, rebuilds and so on. So you will read not just about the Westcliff fleet and the buses acquired when the City Coach Company was taken over by the British Transport Commission in 1952 and placed under Westcliff control, but also smaller operators bought along the way, from Edwards Hall Motors of Eastwood, through Thundersley, Hadleigh & District Motors, Rochford & District, Shoburyness Motor Services, Benfleet & District and the complex story of the various operators on Canvey, which the 30 years 1921 to 1951 need no fewer than 18 pages to unravel, to the likes of Old Tom of Laindon and Nugus of Herongate.



There are a few odd inconsistencies in the book, such as why some acquired operators have reasonably detailed histories whilst others - like Rochford & District - have none, even though their story is known, and why the opening sunroofs of some Bristol JO single deckers merit mention yet the more unusual (but well known) original roll back canvas roofs of the 1939 Bristol K double deckers like preserved AIN 825 don't. Or the lack of an explanation as to why HJ 1313 was re-registered - with the unlucky number 13 repeated in its registration, it was doubly unfortunate as I understand that it was involved in two fatal accidents, so disguising its identity by re-registration was perhaps not a surprise!

Above: a close up of the roof of JN 8566 pictured opposite, as seen through the front windows and revealing the open roof section.

I applaud the Circle for their diligent work in compiling these fleet histories, although I do find the format somewhat frustrating to follow at times, especially with the acquired City fleet, presented as one long list in strict registration number sequence followed by five pages of notes, where splitting the list into types (and sorting by fleet number) and dealing with each type separately would make it easier to



follow and cross-reference. Tables would also help avoid repetition, e.g., for re-numberings. Interestingly, the Circle do perhaps realise this, as there is a useful table at the end summarising the rebodysing and numbering of the City LT class Leyland Tigers, although the table is not cross-referred to in the main text so is easily overlooked. It would also help people new to these books if there was a key to the nine columns of data (which show: fleet number, registration number, chassis make/type, chassis number, body make, body number, seating layout/capacity, date new and date withdrawn) and to the body layout codes. We shouldn't assume that everyone understands the nuances of these codes. I was also puzzled as to why some of the utility Daimlers that Benfleet and Canvey had were coded CWA6 but others CWA6D. CWA6 is well known - the wartime spec bus chassis with 6-cylinder AEC engine; searching elsewhere, I discovered that the final D denotes a Daimler made rear axle as opposed to the more common bought-in Kirkstall unit. There's always something new to learn!

One thing that such histories don't do is to give any idea of the size of the fleet throughout its life. In our Fleet Record books we have tried to tackle this by presenting a series of fleet summaries ('Snapshot in Time') to highlight a fleet at key dates. To give an indication of size, from this book and other sources I can say that the Westcliff fleet stood at 108 vehicles in the summer of 1939, just before the War broke out, rising to 180 vehicles at the end of 1951 with the addition of the Benfleet and Canvey fleets, before the City acquisition added another 106 buses & coaches. By summer 1952, the combined fleet was around 280 vehicles. In an ideal world, all the information the Circle holds would be in a database (rather than just Word documents and printed books) that could be used to sort the data in various ways and to produce summaries.

But these are all minor criticisms. This is not the sort of book to read cover to cover but is a fascinating insight into two most interesting operators and their predecessors and an absolutely essential reference source that has been well worth the wait.



Above: a photo not in the book, but the book records that six of the 1937 ECW bodied Bristol J05G saloons had reversed livery (for seafront use rather than as coaches) with a folding canvas centre section in the roof. Here JN 8566 displays why, as it waits to leave the Kursaal stop on Southend seafront for a trip along the prom and cliffs to Leigh. See also close-up opposite plus our colour archive photo inside the rear cover. **Omnibus Society Collection**

If you would like to know more and see many more illustrations of Westcliff vehicles and publicity then the following book is still available, brief details of which are shown on page 2 of PSVC fleet history PF14.

'Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Ltd., an outline history' by Alan Osborne and J R Young (ISBN 978-0-9568158-0-4) published by Farley Publications, 2011. A4, 224 pp, with over 500 illustrations. SPECIAL OFFER PRICE: £25 (post free). Order direct from Farley Publications, 7, Farley Drive, Seven Kings, ILFORD, Essex IG3 8LT. Cheques to be made payable to A. G. Osborne please. Enquires to dimequin@bushinternet.com.

682 for EBN 682



Following the re-introduction of local fleet names by First in 2012 (but place names rather than former company names), **65682** was the first bus to receive the rare 'Colchester' fleet names, on its cove panels, in December 2013, but did so on its existing Barbie livery. Some of the Scania L94UBs that returned to Essex from First Eastern Counties ran in service with 'Ipswich' fleet names on Barbie livery for a while before these were removed, but 65682 was the only bus in the First Essex fleet to carry an Essex-relevant local fleet name on Barbie livery. The fleet name was set further back than usual. It is seen leaving Colchester Bus Station for Maldon on route 75 on 16 November 2017.

Robert Appleton



Eastern National 2806 (BVX **682B**) Bristol FLF6G / ECW H38/32F, new in 1964, on loan from Clacton depot to Harwich, on layover on route 117 outside Harwich depot in August 1977. The bus alongside, but facing in the opposite direction, is Harwich & Dovercourt Coaches 410 COR, a Dennis Loline III with Alexander H39/29F body new in 1961 to Aldershot & District. At this time the Prins Ferries Bremerhavn to Harwich ferry docked at Navyard Wharf in Harwich. Harwich & Dovercourt Coaches had the contract to transport foot passengers from Navyard Wharf to Harwich Town station, where they boarded a boat train to London Liverpool Street. 410 COR was often used on this contract. A photo of it appeared in EBN 634. **Robert Appleton**



Colin Blackwell Mini Coaches PNM **682W** at the Lorry Park, Ongar on 8 October 1996, a 1980 Bedford YMQ / Duple C35F, ex Ashridge College Berkhamstead. What looks like a registration plate in the windscreen is actually a contract number. Colin Blackwell was only a small company, they never had more than two or three vehicles at a time. At one time they owned Ford Transit / Carlyle C600 NPU which had been acquired from East Midland by Eastern National in May 1986 (number 0600) to convert LRT route 193 to minibus operation but which lasted only just over a year with EN. They were based just outside Ongar near Fyfield. Colin Blackwell the person was always happy to talk to an enthusiast.

Robert Downton

Service Revisions

by Paul Harvey

with thanks to LOTS, Essex, Hertfordshire & Suffolk County Councils, Omnibus Society (Eastern Branch) & Richard Delahoy

The County of Essex (including Southend & Thurrock unitary areas) remains in National Lockdown with bus companies operating reduced timetables to reflect the requirements of essential travel only.

4 January 2021

Epping Forest Community Transport

Service reductions introduced on services 347 (T, Th), reduced to Thursdays only, C392 (M-F) reduced hours of operation, HSB01 (M, W, F) reduced to Wednesdays only. SB09 (M, W) now Abridge to Epping on Mondays, on Wednesdays it is rerouted from Abridge, instead to Debden & Loughton Morrison's. It appears Saturday services on 211/212, 347 & C392 no longer operate, having been suspended since 27 March 2020.

24 January

First Essex

Revised service levels, on Monday to Friday most services operate to a Saturday level of service during the daytime with additional early morning and early evening journeys. Weekend timetables remain unchanged except Saturday evening timetable on service 100. Services X10/X30 operate to a revised daily timetable.

Ensignbus

Z1/Z2/Z4 Tilbury Amazon to Aveley / Canning Town / Pitsea (D)

Certain morning peak hour journeys withdrawn.

25 January

Go Ahead Heddingham

88 Great Yeldham to Colchester (M-S)

New temporary timetables introduced.

89 Braintree to Great Yeldham (M-S)

New temporary timetables introduced.

31 January

First Essex

Chelmsford Park & Ride: Sandon P&R to Chelmer Valley P&R (M-S)

Chelmsford City centre to Chelmer Valley P&R section suspended until further notice. Chelmsford City centre to Sandon P&R section continues at every 15 minutes but see 7 February entry below.

7 February

Arriva Kent Thameside

Colchester Park & Ride (M-S)

Park & Ride service suspended until further notice.

First Essex

Chelmsford Park & Ride (M-S)

Park & Ride service completely suspended until further notice.

8 February

Arriva Kent Thameside

1 Shrub End to Greenstead (M-S)

One early morning journey advanced to operate 10 mins earlier.

1 March

National Express

Service suspension extended to 29 March.

Acquired Vehicle

33402 VX54 MTY SFD388BR64GX53586 4410/2 H47/27F 12/04 First Leicester
Alexander Dennis Trident / ALX400. Acquired from First South Yorkshire & Midlands, Worcester. Towed to Essex from Worcester on 2 February 2021. In Barbie livery with LED blinds. It entered service on Hadleigh's route 26 on 8 February. The acquisition of sisters 33401 & 33403 was recorded in EBN 680.

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 10 2020/21 (27 December - 23 January)

33073 HH (oos)-Disposal, 33088 BN-HH, 33095 BN-HH, 33178 BN-BN (oos), 33190 HH (oos)-Disposal, 37004 CR (oos)-CR, 66826 BN-CF, 67903 CF-BN

The above changes left 33086 as the last President in service at Basildon.

Disposals

33073 and 33190 to Ensignbus, 33073 then on to Shelton Motors, Ely, for scrap, January 2021.
33178 to Ensignbus 5 February 2021.

Area News & Workings

Unfortunately, due to correspondents being at home during Lockdown 3, coupled with information on Bustimes being restricted, reports are limited this month. Following school services being suspended from 11 January 2021 (except Colchester route 17), regular services were reduced from 24 January (mainly a Saturday service on Mondays to Fridays, see 'Service Revisions' on previous page). The Chelmer Valley Park & Ride was suspended from 30 January with the whole service being suspended a week later. A number of vehicles have temporarily been taken out of service at all depots, but we only have details of those at Colchester.

Colchester

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CR. All dates January 2021 except where stated.)

Partial correction to EBN 681. It was correct that 32068 was off road since 18 December with fuel and gearbox issues but it has not returned to service since then. It did have its driver seat removed, but in the first week of February it was being put back together and being prepared for an MOT. With the reduction in services from 24 January a number of vehicles have been taken off road and parked up at the rear of the depot as a 'Reserve Fleet'. They are not SORNed and could be used if required. This included all the rest of the B7TL / ALX400s plus B7RLEs 66759, 66798 & 66970 and Enviro 300s 67735 & 67736. However, in the first week of February, both 66759 and 67735 returned to service and on 7th 32485 was on route 68. In addition, vehicles off road with defects / damage at the end of January were StreetLites 63340, 63341 & 63342 (details of the first and last in EBN 681) and B7RLEs 66810 and 66971. Of these, 63340 has been fully repaired but is still in reserve and hasn't yet returned to service, 63342 has been in the workshop having its engine removed and 66810 was repaired and on the 71A on 7 February. 30564 was also receiving attention in the workshop in the first week of February. Shuttle Dart 41521 was last used on all day staff shuttle on Friday 22nd, but only very infrequently prior to that. B9TL / Gemini 37139 (see EBN 681) returned to service on 30 January.

From the 24 January service changes, route 75/A is predominantly being worked by single-deckers instead of the normal double-deckers (although on 1 February, 32628 was on the route), examples being 63332, 63335, 63336, 63339, 66800, 66801, 66803, 66804, 66810, 66816, 66828, 66872, 67737, 67738, 67741, 67750, 67755, 67756 and 67779.

News of the Harwich routes (11 January-7 February). At the start of the reporting period there were more double-deckers than single-deckers on 103/104, for example on 11 January: 30567, 32087, 37036, 37140, 66800 and 67738. On 14th this changed to only one double-decker: 37042, 66828, 66970, 67738, 67739 and 67750 on this date. The double-deck duty was usually: 0720 Maldon - Colchester 75, dead to Mistley, 0925 Mistley - Colchester 103, 1010 Colchester - Harwich 103, 1140 Harwich - Colchester 103, then on to other services in the afternoon e.g., 62, 65 or 75. From 25th, the Monday - Friday 103/104 timetable was replaced by the Saturday timetable, with each route having a 1 hour 50-minute frequency, giving a combined 55-minute frequency over the common parts of the route. Worked by three buses, they have been three single-deckers, three double-deckers, or a split allocation, examples being: 25th 66801, 67739 and 67742; 28th 37035, 63344 and 66804; 1 February 32673, 37062 and 37140.

During the period covered, only single-deckers have been noted on Sunday 102s, except on 7 February when 37035 was seen. Some Clacton route sightings: 37004 (19th), 37135 (30th) and 37138 (25th) on 74B; 67756 on 76 (31st).

Chelmsford

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CF. All dates January 2021.)

Park & Ride liveried buses continue to appear on normal services (see photo on page 27) and their use thus is likely to increase with the temporary suspension of the P&R service. 36841 on short 42 working on 22nd. 32482 (22nd), 32484 (18th), and 32640 (20th) on 71E. 69431 & 69433 (both 29th) on driver shuttles. 66863 seen at South Woodham Ferrers on driver training on 26th.

As reported in recent EBNs, 66846, 66848 and 66863 have been converted to permanent driver trainers and repainted into an all-red livery with vinyls. The first to be done was 66848 and the front interior after conversion with the driver's screen and bulkhead removed and a trainer's seat added is seen right. Below, rear view. Driver trainers are normally garaged at Chelmsford, but 66848 was on loan to Basildon for a couple of weeks in the summer, where these photos were taken on 20 & 21 August 2020 by **Steven Quay**. A front view is on the rear cover. 66861, currently out of use, will not now become a driver trainer but be sold and instead 66860 will become one.



Basildon & Hadleigh

(All vehicles listed below allocated to BN. All dates January 2021 except where stated.)

32540 has had its main 'Halifax' fleet names replaced with 'Essex' ones, as seen on route 9 in Brentwood High Street on 1 February 2021. (Chris Stewart). A photo feature of double-deckers on route 9 with different fleet names is on the centre pages. From 7 February routes 8/A towards Laindon returned to stand H at Basildon Bus Station, with the 8/A to Pitsea to stand T and the 5A/B joining route 5 on stand C. The previous plan for the 8/A to return to the bus station on 5 December, as reported in EBN 680, must obviously have been postponed (see also EBN 678).



Enviro 400s continue alongside StreetLites on route 9, including NBC liveried 33424 on 25th. Other types reported on the route have been: 32249 (22nd), 32540 (1 February, as illustrated), 44909 (29th), 67161 (8th) & 67166 (22nd) unusual Enviro 200 MMCs, 67903 (19th) first report of an Enviro 350H and 69908 (20th). Routes 94/A continue to be mainly StreetLite operated, although all of Basildon's mini-Enviro 200s have been on the routes in the last month, 44908 on 22nd, 44909 on Saturday 23rd and 44910 on 14th, 19th, 20th & 21st. One double-decker seen, 33551 on Saturday 30th. More unusual, 69908 made two round trips mid-morning on 14th before being replaced by 44909. Other unusual / interesting workings as follows. 33570 (19th) and 44909 (1 February) on 100. 33559 (Saturday 23rd) and 33425 (Saturday 30th) double-deckers on 16.

30 Years Ago

Further to the other snow photos in this issue, there was also heavy snow in February 1991. Eastern National Bristol VR / ECW 3092, STW 36W, is seen on Springfield Road, Chelmsford. This was an unusual working as route 55 was normally worked by Leyland Nationals. At the time the 55 was the main route from the bus station to North Springfield but gradually over the years it was reduced, becoming a peak time only route and has now gone completely, subsumed into the 54 and 56. **David Moth**



With thanks to R Appleton, S Barham, J Bence, J Elliott, J Collins, D Edwards, J Lidstone, W Morrison, R Newman, J Podgorski, C Stewart, First Essex, Bustimes, Facebook, Bus Lists on the Web, Flickr, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

In memory of Group member Terry Clark, a regular long-standing contributor of news for this column who will be sadly missed. As Colchester driver, fellow Group member and regular contributor David Edwards put so well on Facebook: "Farewell Terry and thank you for all you've given us".

Vehicles

At **Southend**, Southend Transport-liveried 3816 (GN07 AVC) is reported to have been withdrawn, it appears to have been last used on 11 December 2020. Repainted into ST deregulation era livery of blue and white with a red band in November 2019, it had sadly proven to be somewhat unreliable and was often out of service.

The loan of three Optare Versas from Guildford to Southend proved to be very short lived. 4214, 4227 and 4229 moved on to Maidstone on the morning of 19 January 2021, after just under two weeks use in Southend. They had been loaned due to a shortage of serviceable buses but were rendered redundant after the service reductions from 18 January.

The two **Colchester** Park & Ride Enviro 200s, 4072/3, that had been on loan to Southend since early September, were due to be returned to Colchester. 4072 was last used on 20 January and 4073 on the 16th. However, at the end of January both were still in store at Southend. Colchester's Darts 1564/5 remain on loan to Southend, 1564 was illustrated last month and 1565 is seen below at Bournes Green Chase on the first day of the recent heavy snow, 7 February, on the Sunday only ECC contract route 4A that gives Wakering its only service on that day of the week, in this case on the 1118 from Shoebury East Beach to Southend (**Richard Delahoy**).

Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus 3873 (KE57 EPA) has moved from Ware to **Harlow**, where it had been new for use on the 510 to Stansted.

Service Reductions

Following the temporary service reductions on 18 January (which did not affect the Saturday or Sunday operations at Southend), the PVR figures for **Southend** are now: Monday-Friday 45, Saturday 50, Sunday 20 (excluding ferry vehicles). Previously the maximum was 52 on M-F schooldays. Each route has a separate allocation (7/8 being counted as one route) except that on M-F & Suns, 6/29 are interworked (whereas under the normal timetables, 6 and 29 are separate schedules on M-F).

At **Colchester**, the Park & Ride service was suspended after 6 February and the site has been temporarily closed. This, plus the reduced timetables introduced on 18 January, has reduced the PVR to Monday-Friday 16, Saturday 13, Sunday 7 (excluding ferry vehicles).

Reduced Monday to Saturday timetables were also introduced at **Harlow** from 18 January, leading to a reduced PVR. We don't have an official figure, but a rough calculation would suggest that the PVR has been reduced by about 14 vehicles on Mondays to Fridays.

Flooding following heavy rain closed the road under the railway bridge in Rectory Road, Hawkwell on a number of occasions in January and early February, with **Southend** service 8 having to divert via Ashingdon (via route 7). Similarly, flooding in Rayne has resulted in **Colchester** route 133 being diverted via the A120 (with a double run into Rayne) at times.



by **Mark Lloyd** with thanks to John Podgorski and the Hedingham website

Arrival

296 (SN10 CCY), a mini-Enviro 200, has been transferred from Konectbus and is currently at Clacton being prepared for service. It was already repainted in fleet livery in 2018 when acquired first time round and should only need fleet names applying. This joins 295, more details of both were in last month's magazine.

Significant Allocations

517	CN - HD	by 16 January
520	KN - CN	early January
521	KN - CN	by 11 January
523	CN - KN	by 19 January
528	CN - KN	by 10 January returned to CN by 19 January

Service News

From 11 January 2021 all services changed to school holiday schedules until further notice, except one Stanway School 902 working from KN, and D1 still serving Plume Upper School, Maldon am & pm. From 18 January workings reappeared on the 901-4 Stanway School services and TLA 1 resumed for key workers' children and included routes TLA A, B and 19, serving East Mersea, West Mersea, Peldon, Abberton, Fingringhoe, Rowhedge and Old Heath. 808 is seen below at Chapmans Lane, West Mersea on 11 February on the Thomas Lord Audley School service (**John Podgorski**).

Fleet News

It has been announced that due to the current reduction in services the opportunity will be taken to undertake more repaints into the current livery. 457 (AU61 AVK), a Scania OmniLink, has been repainted into Hedingham livery ex Konectbus blue and grey. It completes all repaints of Scania vehicles with the exception of the trainer vehicles. Enviro 200 EU58 JCI will be the next vehicle to be repainted. The Dart SLF / Pointers still in red & cream may be deemed now too old to warrant a repaint, as is Konectbus blue / yellow Volvo B7TL / Gemini 510 (LB02 YWX). Blue MPD 287 is due for early withdrawal. No buses are to be SORNed during this lockdown, although some staff have been furloughed, mainly school bus drivers.



by **Richard Delahoy** with thanks to the Companies



Above: Illustrating the wet January 2021, Stephensons 477 (EU66 AVB) on route 38A at Sloe Hill, Halstead, where the 38/A cut across from the main A131 Halstead - Braintree road to serve Gosfield and the A1017. **Tony Sales**. Below: Illustrating the cold February 2021, Stephensons 604 (EU13 EBL) by Chalkwell Station on the 10th. **Steven Quy**

Acquired Vehicles

438 YY15 FZC and 439 YY15 FZD, ADL Enviro 200 9.6m, B33F

They were purchased from Mistral Bus & Coach, although had been operated by Omniserv on Heathrow Car Park shuttles; they are currently awaiting repaint - depot allocation is not yet determined.

Services

Mileage in the latest lockdown has dropped back to circa 85% of normal, with most school services removed, and commercial services generally running a Saturday timetable. A number of double-deckers were delicensed from 1 February, as per last spring's lockdown.



Vehicle News

Dennis Trident/Alexander V130 MEV, acquired last year (see EBN 679) has been up seated to 82 and seat belted, made PSVAR compliant and is now awaiting repaint.

Status Change

Volvo Olympian / Alexander BIG 9210 (N592 BRH) has been withdrawn from service.

Disposal

Recently acquired Scania K340 / Caetano FI08 KLZ (as reported in EBN 681) to Angies Coaches, Suffolk, January 2021.



Panther in the Snow February 2021

Above: DB09 PAN on route 118 at Ramsey Church on 8th.
Stephen Barham



Top Right: AB10 PAN in the Panther yard at Harwich with a Class 317 parked on the disused rail line behind the depot on 10th.
Adam Barham



Middle Right: BIG 9856 on emergency rail replacement at Wrabness Railway Station on 9th.
Adam Barham

Bottom Right: DC56 PAN on route 81 at Dedham on 9th
Stephen Barham



by **Adam Kelleher** with thanks to Ross Newman, Owen Woodliffe, Bus Lists on the Web and Flickr

Acquired Vehicle

WX05 RUO Optare Solo M850 Slimline B26F, new to First Somerset & Avon 53817 05/05

Ex First Cymru, in First Barbie livery. In service by 8 February. Sister WX05 RUC was recorded as an acquisition in last month's EBN.

Services

On 18 January 2021, Central Connect were using Sprinter CC04 GAL on resurrected route 542/A, seen below at Debden (**Owen Woodliffe**). It seems that Central Connect may have transferred the Sprinter to this route as the much-reduced H1/H3 appear to be now worked off the 383/4. (This bus was illustrated on route H3 in EBN 680.) However, on 23rd, recently acquired Solo WX05 RUC was on the route, see photo on page 26. On the 18th, route 410 was being worked by one of the two single deck Scania OmniCities, SGZ 1087; the 14-year-old OmniCities are possibly being used rather than parked up newer vehicles due to their having 'Vape' super-rear adverts.



A brief history of route 542/A supplied by Owen Woodliffe. It commenced as an ECC contract service awarded to EOS on 11 April 2016 to replace the 542/3 previously operated by Trustybus. On 3 April 2018 EOS extended their commercial service 87 from Epping to incorporate the 542/A Debden local journeys. EOS gave notification to cease their commercial routes on 31 August 2018 with Arriva applying to the Traffic Commissioner to take them on. However, EOS were in such dire financial straits that they wished to close a month earlier and Arriva agreed to bring forward the takeover date. However, when Arriva applied to the TC to do this they were refused as they had not given the statutory notice. Thus for 1 and 2 August EOS (Swallow) were forced to continue but now did not have sufficient drivers so split the routes so that just one bus operated the Debden local as 542/A, presumably to fulfil their ECC contract, with the 87 operating to Epping only. Representations were made to the TC and permission was granted for Arriva to take on the routes on 3 August, with the 87 incorporating the 542/A journeys once more. Then on 30 December 2020 Arriva withdrew the 87 and from 2 January 2021 a new 542/A ECC contract for the Debden local part of the route commenced, operated by Central Connect, ironically bringing Galleon operation back, as per the pre-11 April 2016 operation.



Left: EOS 753 (HV02 PCY) on route 542 on Loughton High Road on 1 August 2018. **Owen Woodliffe**

Photo Feature: Brentwood Double-Deck Variety on Route 9

Recent photos of double-deckers on route 9 with different fleet names.

Prior to the first lockdown in March last year, route 9, Basildon to Brentwood, was almost exclusively worked by StreetLites with very occasional double-decker appearances. However, since services started to return to normal in summer 2020, although StreetLites are still common, there have been far more double-deckers on the route. These are normally Enviro 400s, although other types have also appeared as illustrated over these two pages. There were also reports of Barbie liveried acquired Trident / ALX400s on the route in late November / early December before these moved from Basildon to Hadleigh, but unfortunately, we have no photos. If anyone else has, please send the editor a copy to include next month.

Right: In October last year, First Essex acquired Volvo B7TL / Transbus ALX400 32249 & 32260 from First West of England. Both entered service with FE with 'Bristol' fleet names as illustrated in EBN 679. On 14 January 2021 they were on successive route 9 journeys. 32260 (top) still had its Bristol fleet names, but 32249, running half an hour in front, had received 'Essex' ones (bottom). Both **Adam Kelleher**

Below: see next page.



Bottom of previous page: Transbus Trident / President 33178, without a main fleet name, in Brentwood High Street on 30 November 2020. This bus has now been sold. Before the service reductions introduced from 24 January 2021 as a result of Lockdown 3, 33086 was the last President in service at Basildon, so it is very likely this scene will never be repeated.

Below: Heritage NBC liveried Enviro 400 33424 in Knight's Way, East Ham Estate on 25 January 2021 with 'Eastern National' fleet names.

Bottom: Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Gemini 32539 was acquired from First West Yorkshire in December last year. In Brentwood High Street, still with main 'Halifax' fleet names on 16 December 2020. All **Chris Stewart**



EBN678 page 21 and EBN681 page 21 gave details of six ADL Enviro 200s acquired by Ipswich Buses. Four of these are short 8.9m length 29 seaters: 70/73 (YX59 BZL/N), 71/72 (LX58 LMO/M). From 11 January three of these four were allocated to Essex routes replacing Optare Versas. For example, on 13th, 72 worked Clacton - Mistley 2/A, and 70/71 worked Colchester routes 4 & 11. On 15th 70/72 worked Colchester routes 4 & 11. On 13th one Versa just reached Essex, when 150 (YK08 EPI) worked the 0811 Langham - East Bergholt High School 194. With the large reduction in children travelling to school, relief journeys on school services were withdrawn from 11 January, and some school services switched from double-deck to single-deck operation. In addition, the Ipswich School contracts were suspended at some point during January.

From 18 January most journeys on services 92/93 were worked by single-deckers, including further Enviro 200s, 77 (KX59 GNY), which had been acquired in 2016, and 104 (SN16 OCK), 106/108 (YX66 WCK/WCM) all new in 2016. These are 10.8m long, 77 has 37 seats, 104/106/108 have 39 seats. For example, on 16 January 77 worked on Ipswich - Manningtree 92. On 20th Versas 145/148 (YK08 EPA/EPE) were on Ipswich - Colchester 93, with sister 152 (YK08 EPV) on Ipswich - Manningtree 92. Enviro 200 72 (LX58 LMM) worked 1610 Suffolk One College - Colchester 93 and 1715 Colchester - Ipswich 93. The only double-decker noted was Scania OmniCity 33 (YR61 RRV) on 1610 Suffolk One College - Manningtree 92 and 1720 Manningtree - Ipswich 92. Also on 20th, single-deckers continued on the other Essex services: Enviro 200 71 on 2/A, 73 and 104 on 4 & 11, plus 106 on 194.

Then on 21 January another acquired Enviro 200 worked all day on Ipswich - Colchester 93. This was 75 (GD10 MVM), 10.8m long, 38 seats, acquired from Autocar of Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent. Originally registered AC10 BUS when new in 2010 to Autocar. Thus, all seven Enviro 200s (fleet numbers 70 -76) acquired by Ipswich Buses in 2020 have now worked into Essex.

The use of single-deckers on Essex routes continued into February, for example on 3rd: Versa 150 (YK08 EPI) on Clacton - Mistley 2/A, Enviro 200s 70 & 73 on Colchester routes 4 & 11, 77 and 106 on Ipswich - Colchester 93/A, 108 on Ipswich - Manningtree 92, and 75 on Langham - East Bergholt High School 194.

Greater Anglia rail replacement services continued over the weekend of 9/10 January, covering Ipswich - Colchester - Hythe - Marks Tey. Noted were Scania OmniCities 31/40/43/44 (YR61 RPY/RUW/RVL/RRZ), and Mercedes Citaro 154 (BF65 HVU).

All the changes detailed above meant that the five DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlanders, fleet numbers 55 -59, were taken out of use after service on 8 January. In happier times 57 (PN52 XBJ) was in Colchester Road, Manningtree, on 29 September 2016, working 0858 East Bergholt High School - Manningtree 92, and 0920 Manningtree - Ipswich 92.

Robert Appleton





Dealer Stock Movements January 2021

Vehicles In

From **Arriva Kent & Surrey**: Scania YN06 TFZ
 From **Bear Buses**: Trident LX55 EPZ
 From **First Essex**: Tridents LN51 GOE, LT52 XAA - these were First Essex 33073 & 33190, see page 8
 From **First Wales**: Solos WX05 RUC/O
 From **Go Ahead London**: Volvo B7TL LX54 HAU, Dart P056 JFE
 From **Lothian Buses**: Scania SN57 DBY/DCE
 From **Marchants Coaches**: Versas YJ57 XVO/P, CX58 AUA
 From **Metroline**: MAN LK07 AYJ, Enviro 200 YX09 FNK, Dart RN51 DOH
 From **Nu-Venture**: Trident LK05 GFO
 From **RATP London**: Enviro 200s YX58 DVH, SK07 DXF, Scania YT59 SHV, Volvo B7TL V194 OOE

Vehicles Out

Enviro 400 LK58 KHR: **Aintree Coaches**
 Solos WX05 RUO/C: **Galleon Coaches, Roydon, Essex** - see page 15
 Volvo B7RLE SK07 CGY: **Halpenny Transport Ltd, Dundalk, Co Louth**
 Volvo B7TLs LX06 DZW/Y/EAB/O: **Imperial Coaches, Slough**
 Optare Versas YJ57 XVO/P, CX58 AUA: **Marshall's Coaches, Sutton-on-Trent**
 Volvo B11RT BV66 WNZ: **Rambler Coaches, Hastings**
 Volvo B11RT BV66 WOA: **Staintons Coaches, Kent**
 Enviro 200 YX10 BDV: **Tower Transit**
 Volvo B7TL LX05 FCC: **Yelloway Coaches, Oldham**

To Shelton Motors for scrap

Tridents LN51 GOE, LK05 GFO - the former was First Essex 33073, see page 8
 Enviro 200s LX07 BXW, LK08 FLF, YX09 NFK
 Dart RL51 DOH
 MANs LK07AYJ, LK57 AYY
 Optare Versa YJ60 KGA
 Volvo B7TL YG02 DLD/J

Ensignbus Fleet

Enviro 200 702 sold to R Robertson & Son, Shetlands.



Above: as a space filler, a flashback to 3 May 2012 and the launch of Dart 729 in heritage City livery, at Sheffield Station with service bus 782 behind. **Adam Kelleher**

Vectare

by **Chris Stewart** with thanks to Bus Lists on the Web and Flickr

Between October and December last year, on loan WF StreetLite SN64 CU0, B28F, was often in use on route 61 (Brentwood-Blackmore). This vehicle was new to Go-Ahead London in January 2015 as WS40. It has since operated for Nightingale Coaches, County Durham and Travel Express (Bilston area). It is seen (bottom) at Brentwood Railway Station, still in London all red, with a 'Let's Go' name from its Travel Express days, on the 61C variation on 6 October 2020, with First Essex Enviro 200 44005 on route 565 behind. This rarer Wheel Forward type StreetLite can be compared with the much more common Door Forward version in the photo on the opposite page.

From 5 January this year, all silver Mercedes RE70 EZU has seen regular use on the 61. It is seen in Brentwood High Street (top) on 14 January 2021. From 2 February Mercedes / EVM Cityline RX70 SKZ, numbered 204 and in fleet livery, appeared on the route.

All **Adam Kelleher**



Other Operators

by Roger A Smith with thanks to Richard Delahoy, Matthew Evans and the PSV Circle

Acme Bus, Molehill Green

V130 MEV, an Alexander bodied Dennis Trident, has gone to G Bishop of Downham Market. Norfolk. However, as reported in EBN 679, it then moved on to Panther Travel, Essex, see also page 14 of this issue.

Don's, Great Dunmow

H77F Alexander bodied Leyland Olympian J623 GCR has gone to Barkers Motors, Wrexham, Wales.

Kirby's of Rayleigh

Further to EBN 681, the two coaches on loan from KT Coaches of Kendal, FJ13 EBN / EBX, have continued here and were noted on rail replacement during January, but it is thought that they might be returned to Cumbria after 7 February.

Klarners Coaches, Colchester

Further to EBN 681, Scania L94UB / Wrightbus YN05 WKE came from Buses 4 Sale, Stockton-on-Tees.

Marc One Travel (Marc T Middleton), Billericay / Hornon on the Hill

... is another operator taking a single deck bus to provide PSVAR compliant stock for rail replacement with ex Harrogate Coach Travel JSU 721 (NK54 NUX), a Scania L94UB / Wrightbus B43F. It is now re-registered to M14 TVL and was first noted on 31 January on rail replacement.

M&M Staffing, Cooksmill Green

Further to EBN 681, Neoplan Tourliner MM68 BUS, back from having a wheelchair lift fitted in Portugal, is back in use, it was seen on Greater Anglia rail replacement Marks Tey - Colchester / Hythe / Ipswich on 9 January 2021. As reported and illustrated in EBN 679, StreetLite SK68 TXP has been on loan to M&M and in turn worked on extra school services for Arriva Southend. Another StreetLite on loan is SN68 AGF, which was new to Passenger Plus. It is possible that this was a replacement for TXP. AGF was seen on the same rail replacement on 9 January and is illustrated below, parked in a lay-by at Hoddesdon on 15 January (**Allan White**). It was again on GA rail replacement on 6 February, on Ingatestone to Newbury Park.



East Kent AEC Regents in Essex

The letter from Peter Carr last month, with accompanying photo, about East Kent AEC Regent YIG 817 in Essex has rekindled some memories. **Robin Jenkinson** has written: "I was fascinated by Peter's story of YIG 817, the East Kent Regent V that they borrowed. By an amazing co-incidence it later had a much stronger Essex connection. East Kent sold it to Partridge Coaches of Hadleigh, Suffolk, who had the army contract with Colchester Barracks. At the time I was a self-employed signwriter and coach painter and Partridge was one of my customers, who I also helped out with a bit of driving when they were busy. As a result of this I drove YIG 817 several times carrying loads of soldiers to either Colchester Railway Station or Harwich Docks where they boarded ship. I took a photograph one time at the docks after I had unloaded there. I also drove it many times on schools." Robin has kindly sent in his photo, unfortunately your Editor was unable to scan it in time for this issue, but it will appear in a future EBN.

Paul Harvey recalls another East Kent Regent that visited Essex twice in the late 1970s. This was Park Royal bodied MFN 946F which was used as part of the launch of the Southend Travelcard in 1977 (as illustrated by **Richard Delahoy's** photo on the inside front cover of this issue) and the Basildon FairCard in 1978. In Paul's two photos right, it is seen at Rochford Railway Station in the former year and Laindon in the latter. As well as the signage being different, by 1978 the light green areas had been repainted cream and the white NBC double N symbols had been replaced with red / blue on white ones, plus one above the front grille. Paul and a Southend Inspector staffed the bus in both years, the Inspector did the driving while Paul was the ticket clerk on the bus. Customers had their photo taken on board to go with their weekly ticket. More information on the two cards is provided in Richard's article on page 24. A nearside shot of MFN at Laindon in 1978 was included in 'A Blast from the Past' in EBN 668.

But that is not the end of the story of MFN in Essex. It has been preserved and restored as a bus, and since the start of the annual Ensignbus December running days in 2006 it has made occasional appearances as a guest vehicle. There were photos of it in both the December 2007 issue of EBN (524) and the December 2017 issue (644) and a further photo of it, taken in Brentwood High Street on 2 December 2017, is below (**Chris Stewart**). It is also possible that it had visited Essex before 1977, more information on the next page.



Chris Stewart has provided further information about East Kent Regents in Essex. One used to come every year doing the rounds as a promotional vehicle for South East holidays, Chris remembers seeing and possibly going in it at Eastern National's Chelmsford Bus Station. **Alan Tebbit** thinks that they probably stayed a week and annoyingly blocked stand 10! They toured the country early each year, apparently going as far as Newcastle. Chris seems to remember that the same bus got refitted each year, but PFN 866 gave way to a newer one at some point. On the 'Old Bus Photos' website there is a photo of MFN 946F undertaking this role (although the photo is not taken in Essex), so it is likely that this is the bus that replaced PFN 866 and thus that it also visited Essex in the late 1960s as well as the late 1970s and 21st century. It also explains why it was hired for the Travelcard and FairCard launches as it had convertible fittings inside from its time on holiday promotions.

The photo top right shows PFN 866 in Duke Street Bus Station in Spring 1966 with Eastern National Bristol KSW 2332 (TNO 686) behind. It was taken by **Terry Clark** and is included as a tribute to him.

Right: Thorn EMI of Hainault had at least two of the full front PFN batch for staff transport, PFN 845 being seen here in 1977. **Chris Stewart**. Chris's memory is that they carried a blue and white livery.

Denyer Bros of Stondon Massey had a long-established penchant for AECs and ran two ex-East Kent Regent Vs for several years. 6804 FN arrived first, seen here (**Den Denyer** with his trademark '222' number blind) followed by AFN 777B, both acquired from Ensign (the brothers knew Peter Newman) around 1982/3. Both survived in the yard for very many years after withdrawal, 777 eventually going to Dover Transport Museum but subsequently was broken up for spares whilst 6804 is still believed to survive albeit unrestored, having recently changed hands a couple of times. Denyer's were apparently taken to task by East Kent for running these with their fleet name still on show and were asked to paint it out! Denyer Bros only ever ran two or three vehicles at a time, on schools (Ongar) and private hire - with a weekly bingo service for a while being the only registered operation they ever had. Chris can't exactly remember what Den said about 222 but thinks it stemmed from a childhood nickname (Dinky Doo - 222). They gave up operations when Den's older brother Ron died but Den carried on doing mechanical work, usually on cars but also on preserved buses stored at the yard, until he died. (Thanks to **Ian Mahoney** for some info.)



The Southend Travelcard & Basildon FairCard

by Richard Delahoy

The Southend Travelcard was introduced on 13 March 1977 and was quite ground-breaking at the time. It was initially priced at £2.95 per week and gave unlimited travel on all bus services within the Southend Co-Ordination Area - comprising the districts of Southend, Rochford & Castle Point, extending as far as Tarpots Corner (Benfleet), Carpenters Arms (Rawreth) and Rettendon Turnpike. But, significantly, it also included British Rail, the stations covered being Shoeburyness to Benfleet and Southend Victoria to Rayleigh. It was available for weekly and monthly periods.

To buy a ticket you needed a special photocard first and these were only issued at the enquiry offices in Central Bus Station, Southend Victoria Bus Station (the EN depot) and at EN's Hadleigh depot. Hence East Kent Regent MFN 946F was hired to enable sales to be undertaken over a wider area in the initial weeks. Each sales point had a Polaroid camera (remember those?) to capture your photo and print it directly as part of the photocard, rather than sticking passport photos onto pre-printed cards. The initial card cost 30p and was dubbed as 'your personal travel document'! I thought the scheme was a great idea and was keen to be the first customer. So, on the inaugural day, I presented myself at Central Bus Station as that office had the earliest opening time - 0800. I was indeed the first member of the public to buy one, gaining photocard number 000033 - the lower numbers would have been used for specimens for staff training.



The actual ticket was handwritten or used a rubber stamp on pre-printed blanks, as can be seen in the photo (the ticket was placed side-by-side with the card in a plastic wallet). Once you had the required photocard, tickets could also be bought at any of the rail stations in the area and at the Civic Centre, who also handled postal sales.

I'm not sure how successful the ticket was, since not much sales data is publicly available. The initial revenue split was, I believe, BR 7%, SCT 34.4%, ENOC 58.6%. Subsequently the rail share was increased - for instance, a November 1989 apportionment return gave the split as: BR 21%, SCT 33%, EN 46%. That return, for a 4-week period, showed sales of 4,954 weekly tickets and 582 monthlies.

It must be remembered that for most of its life there were few or no return fares on buses and no rover tickets, just point to point seasons, so that Travelcard was the only product of its type for people making multiple journeys. Sadly, it was never available as a day ticket, probably reflecting the limitations of on-bus ticketing systems at the time. Prices rose over time, inevitably, so that by 1989 the cost was £10 weekly, £40 monthly.

Perhaps surprisingly, given the ending of the Southend Co-ordination scheme in October 1986, Travelcard initially survived bus deregulation, although competing bus-only products were introduced alongside it and undermined much of the case for its existence. It was withdrawn from 5 January 1992, apparently after BR pulled out because they felt they were not getting a sufficient share of the revenue pot.

Interestingly, Southend had adopted the 'Travelcard' name a full six years before London started using it in May 1983, and even then, the London Travelcard didn't include British Rail services. These came in with a separate product, 'Capitalcard', in 1985 before the London Travelcard was expanded to include BR from January 1989, absorbing the Capitalcard. So perhaps Southend could be considered a pioneer in multi-modal products and the use of photocards?

The Regent V returned to Essex again when EN introduced the Basildon FairCard scheme from 9 April 1978. FairCard was a bus only product, only valid on EN buses (there weren't any others in Basildon in those days) and initially only covered Basildon, Laindon and Pitsea, extending to meet the Southend version at Tarpots. Wickford and Billericay were not added until February 1980. A similar type of photocard was produced and guess who went out to get a very early one? Not quite number 33, but mine was number 000079, although I can't now recall when and where it was issued. I photographed the Regent in the car park of the Jolly Friar pub on Whitmore Way in Basildon on 15 April 1978, so it was probably then - and perhaps Group member **Paul Harvey** (today our Publications Coordinator and past Chairman) sold it to me? Paul staffed the bus and recalls "the cameras were attached to a big black box like a suitcase. The master card was inserted into the machine, the photo was taken and added to the master card, where we had to wait until it was printed and was dry before we were able to cut each photocard". A photo of Paul's own Southend Travelcard, including the wallet, is on page 1.



FairCard was still going as late as 2001 and had been expanded with an outer zone taking in Grays and Lakeside, but we do not seem to have recorded when it ceased. Does anyone know?

Same Bus, Same Photographer, 55 Years Apart



London Bus Co., Northfleet, Kent XF1 (CUV 51C) at Two Brewers Ongar on 6 December 2020 operating a 'Santa Special' for the Epping Ongar Railway prior to Essex moving into Tier 3 and then 4. A 1965 Daimler Fleetline / Park Royal H72F, new to London Transport, in early 1970s, pre-NBC, dark green and yellow London Country livery. A Central Connect Solo on route 420 is behind. **Robert Downton.** In contrast, Robert took the photo below, with a Kodak brownie camera, of the same bus at Moorgate, London whilst it was on trial in central London (from the Country area) on 4 January 1966. We wouldn't normally feature central London photos of non-Essex operators in EBN, but this comparison of the same bus taken nearly 55 years apart by the same photographer was too interesting to ignore.



First Buses with Essex Connections, but not First Essex



Above: First Potteries 43877 (EU06 KDK) Dart / Caetano in Urban livery in Hanley in August 2020. This vehicle had been new to SM Coaches of Harlow in May 2006. It is well travelled and a search on Flickr shows it was with Poppleton Coaches, Pontefract, Travel Master of Manchester and then Bodman Coaches of Worton (Wiltshire) before being acquired by First via Ensignbus in 2013 (as reported in EBN 591). It has been with First Potteries since then and remained in service at the time of writing.

Peter Mansbridge



Right: Central Connect Solo WX05 RUC still in First Barbie livery on route 542 at Debdon on 23 January 2021. As reported last month this was recently acquired from First Cymru and as reported on page 15 it has now been joined by sister WX05 RUO.

Owen Woodliffe

Park & Ride Buses on Normal Services

Two of First Essex's Chelmsford Park & Ride Enviro 200 MMCs, 67195 and 67197, remain at Hadleigh depot operating on normal services. The seven at Chelmsford, 67189-94/6, also occasionally work on regular routes as well as Park & Ride, as reported in recent EBNs and on page 9 of this issue. With the temporary closure of the two P&R sites due to Lockdown 3 (see page 7) these workings are likely to become more common.

Above: 67192 is seen at Ongar, Two Brewers, on 18 January 2021 showing that even vehicles painted all over black cannot hide the winter dirt. **Robert Downton**

Below: Two Arriva Colchester Park & Ride liveried Enviro 200s have been on loan at Southend since September 2020 for school duplicate services. 4073 was illustrated working a school extra on page 29 of EBN 678. After schools broke up on 18 December they were used on normal services, although, as reported last month, 4073 was out of use after 14 December, returning to service on 6 January 2021. Here is a photo of the other one, 4072, in Southend Travel Centre on route 6 on 12 January, a week before it was taken out of service. **Richard Delahoy**



Blind spot - a mystery - solved!

by Richard Delahoy

This short article is a bit unusual in that, in writing it, the story has changed completely. Let me explain. From time to time, we feature listings of destination blinds, normally with an explanation of where (and usually when) they have been used. But here's one that was a mystery to me. The illustration is taken from a listing on eBay last November and the seller didn't know its origins. Nor did we at the time.

The list of entries is quite short and the style of lettering, with sloping lettering, is reminiscent of coach blinds of the 1950s. Yet (and this can't be seen in our black & white photo), the lettering appeared to be in dayglow yellow, which suggested the 1980s or later. And that would rule out most if not all of the traditional small coach operators. Then as I typed up the article, asking for suggestions for the "mystery" blind, the penny dropped!

The entries point to **Rose Brothers** (Primrose Coaches) of Chelmsford, who ran a London to Chelmsford route as well as some excursions and sold out to Eastern National in June 1958. And perhaps to SEV814, a 1951 Leyland Royal Tiger with a relatively rare Thurgood body. It was new to Rose Bros and was still in the fleet when EN took over, being the only vehicle EN kept, acquiring fleet number 015 in the series for acquired single deckers. There are only four pictures that I know of featuring that coach, all taken in EN days, and show three of the entries featured on this short blind.

As well as the London route, Rose Bros held licences for a service to Galleywood Racecourse (hence "Races") and some excursions from Chelmsford and Witham (which fit most of the other entries). I'm not sure about the Wethersfield entry, but it says "Contract" so maybe it was to the airfield there? Perhaps a reader can shed more light on this. There is also a photo of the Daimler CVD6 double decker that Rose owned relatively briefly, ONO 289, in the Omnibus Society collection, showing "Steeple Stone" on its blind, a summer-only service.

SEV 814 was withdrawn by Eastern National in 1963 by which time it was a definite rarity in the fleet. Of course, the blind could have come from another coach owned by Rose Bros, there were others with a similar blind box layout, but it would be nice to think it came from SEV814, which is illustrated below in a photo taken by **John Boylett**, courtesy of John Kaye and the brilliant sct61 website, on Saturday 18 July 1959 at Ascot, making good use of its "Races" blind display.

And the blind? Well, I saved the illustration but didn't bid as I had not realised its significance. I should not have allowed myself to be put off by the yellow lettering! I can't now find the original listing, so don't know if it sold and who owns it now. Do you?

Incidentally, there was a feature article about Rose Bros in our issue 493, May 2005. If you'd like a copy, just let me know (details p2).



Braintree Bus Park in the Snow



Three of the original 1969 batch of five Eastern National VRs, 3001/2/4 (CPU980/1/3G) were quickly transferred to Braintree after a short period of use on the Southend to London X10, for which they had been partially repainted into this 'dual purpose' livery. At BE they were generally to be found on the town service 321, several journeys on which extended beyond the Deanery Gardens terminus to serve the Cortauld's factory at Bocking, as seen displayed here, as the bus leaves Braintree Bus Park with a Heddingham & District ex West Yorkshire LS behind. This textile mill provided significant local employment for over 160 years from 1820.

Despite two major accidents during its working life (one involving the loss of its roof), 3002 served a full 17 years in normal service and even after that continued in use as a Driving Trainer. **EBEG Collection**, caption by **Chris Stewart**.

This photo is a teaser for Part 3 of Nigel Turner's story of Braintree Bus Park 1932-2020 which will appear in EBN soon.

Letters

Colin Sigston has written in to comment on some items published in EBN during 2020

Firstly, further to EBNs 673, 675 & 676, Colin has provided some more information on Bedford VALs which operated in Essex. However, as we are also collating details of these from various other sources, we will save those to be part of a combined article in a future EBN.

Next, on the inside rear cover of EBN 673 was a photo of ex London Transport RM317, kindly supplied by Paul Bateson who wrote "(It is) owned by Luis and Monica Vuoto, Ushuaia City Tour and is the most southerly RM in the world. They have operated the bus on the city tour for 20 years and in November 2019 I was guest of honour at their 20th Anniversary celebration. I think your picture (referring to a photo in EBN 672) is actually RM371. A picture of the real RM317 is attached just for the record." However, Colin takes issue with the description of the photo as the 'real' RM317, writing: "When a bus went in to Aldenham for overhaul, the next bus out took the identity of the one just going in. Thus, for example, if RM1234 went in on a particular day, that same day one came out as RM1234, being a completely different vehicle. Also, as the body was separated from the front and rear subframes, and there were two more RM (short length) bodies than there were subframes, these were most likely from a different bus. Many of the earlier bodies had five (a few had six) different identities during their time with London Transport. Thus, the body of the RM in Argentina started life as RM692, then became RM715, then RM750, then RM800, then RM317 (information from 'Routemaster Body Swaps' by James Prince). I have no idea of the history of the subframes. They are reported to have serial numbers starting A (front) and B (rear) corresponding to their original RM numbers. Thus, the bus in Argentina should more correctly be described as 'the final RM317' or 'the original RM692'".

Finally, referring to Robert Downton's photo of RT315 on route 38A on page 32 of EBN 675, Colin writes: "The registration of the bus behind appears to be KXW 1 so it is RTL651, one of 450 RTLs that had Metro-Cammell bodies."

Brian Barrett, one of the three people who established ENEG in 1964 as Group Member No. 2. Moving the Crowds - More Memories

Many thanks for the Tylers Avenue article in EBN 680. By an amazing co-incidence, I enjoyed a family outing to Southend on one of the very days described, Easter Monday 1955, when I was 10. Our boarding stop was the Green Gate (in Ilford, on Eastern Avenue, just west of Newbury Park station) and we kept a close watch on empty 'City Coaches' heading towards London, knowing from past experience that at least one of them would be turned 'to clear the road'. So after about a 30-minute wait, a Daimler double-decker duly arrived which had started from Gants Hill and became fully loaded by Parkside, Romford. Clearly, we were more fortunate than the assembled masses at Wood Green that day (where over 300 were still waiting at lunchtime).

Looking back, City treated the 'Main Road' on busy days like an excursion, hence the guarantee to return people to their origin. We returned on a Leyland Gnu (it may even have been the one illustrated right, from the **Omnibus Society Collection**), having queued for about 90 minutes, running as a 'Through Relief' direct via the Southend Arterial Road and reached home just before midnight. Sadly, I didn't make a note of the bus numbers but looking back I see that it was the last journey I ever made on a Gnu. We used to go as a family to Southend once every fortnight in the summer and my connection with the 251 route then extended to going from the Green Gate to Tottenham Broad Lane to go to school from 1956 to 1963, then as a bus conductor in 1964 and finally as a driver in 1966.



Fast forwarding to 1963 and my time working in the ENOC Licencing department, I recall that the conditions of the London Transport consent to operate in the 'Special Area' reflected London Transport's desire to restrict the extent of local traffic carried within it, which was extensive enough to require mid-week duplication, particularly on Romford Market Day on a Wednesday. The consent for the service, the 251, limited the capacity to only 420 seats per hour (i.e., 6 x 70 seaters) at this time, in respect of journeys both picking up and setting down in the LT Special Area. Hence the three categories of relief described in the article. Reliefs or service extras effectively ran as duplicates to service buses and picked up and set down at all stops. 'Extra Reliefs' were not allowed to both pick up *and* set down within the Special Area but otherwise followed the normal route. 'Through reliefs' were similar but operated direct via the Southend Arterial Road A127, rather than via Brentwood, Billericay, Wickford and Rayleigh. Conductors on the latter two reliefs had to announce "Southend only" to intending passengers boarding within the LT Special Area, although nobody bothered on return journeys to Wood Green. Only Reliefs counted towards the hourly seat restriction (I don't know whether this was constant at 420 or whether it had increased over the years).

London Transport took this restriction very seriously and about once a month we received a letter in Licensing to say that LT Inspectors had noted in excess of the hourly allowance at such and such a time and place. On investigation, it generally transpired that early or late running had produced a glitch and was resolved by showing the records of bus movements over a longer time period. It is fair to say that Eastern National gradually abandoned City's open ended commitment to intending passengers and began capacity constraining the route on the basis that if fewer seats were provided towards Southend, fewer would be required to take them home again, although the occasional 'slash' was still being operated as late as 1966.

'Slash' was the slang for overtime, as another conductor, **Mike Harper**, explains here - from his memoirs of working at Southend depot in 1974 & 1975:

"It was a bright sunny summer Sunday and Johnny and I were scheduled to work a spare - just turn up and wait and see who doesn't! The day was promising to be a real scorcher! It seemed to us that pretty much everyone had turned up for work, despite the promise of the glorious day that was unfolding, when we were called down from the canteen: "Driver Corder, Conductor Harper, we have a job for you." Apparently, it had been reported that there were some pretty significant crowds waiting to get down to Southend for the day. "We want you to run up to Gants Hill and come back a few minutes ahead of schedule in front of the regular 251." Our very own slash! They found us a spare semi (-automatic FLF Lodekka) and off we went.

"We confused the crew working the 151 to Canvey somewhat, when they rounded Gants Hill to find us waiting there, still marked Private. But as soon as they left, I changed the blinds to '251 Southend' and we waited. By the time we left, about five minutes ahead of normal, we had quite a few passengers - and a good two-thirds load by the time we reached Romford (still keeping just a couple of minutes ahead of normal schedule). I had to show my waybill to a 'Lurker' (Inspector) we picked up in Harold Hill, to prove we weren't the normal service running early. He got out at Brentwood (time for a cuppa I suppose!) and then we picked up the pace a little, figuring that we had got the 'London crowd' we were meant to. It was a much better way to spend the day than just sitting in the depot. By the time we got back, we were well into the shift and were told we could go home. A fine day's work: a slash and a short shift!"



Colin Hodgkin has sent me the above 1920s shot of The Stag pub on Hatfield Heath (with thanks to Mark Radcliffe, Jean Whybrew and the Hatfield Regis Local History Society Facebook Group). It shows a bus of The Stag bus service, which was based at the pub. My guess is that the vehicle is a small bus body mounted on a Ford Model T chassis; the registration looks to be CP 54x. The Stag bus service was the name for the bus operation of Hall's coaches; the vehicles were reportedly kept behind the pub. The owner was Eric Halls, who I have seen described both as the landlord of the pub and as a pub regular. In the early 1970s he operated a couple of ex-Northampton Daimler rear-entrance double-deckers on schools' contract; they would sometimes be parked up during the day on a piece of land opposite the Eastern National Bishop's Stortford garage in South Street. The Hall's vehicle that EBN readers are most likely to remember is his Bedford 461 ULG, which was used on his Thursday (Bishops Stortford market day) and Saturday service (Sheering - Hatfield Heath - Little Hallingbury - Bishops Stortford). Even in the 1970s it was normally 2-person operated, Olive May being the conductress. However, Olive also held a PSV licence, and occasionally (presumably when Eric wasn't available) drove the bus, with the cash-bag and (I think) Bell-punch worn just as she wore them when conducting. I also attach my 1976 photo of 461 ULG on the market-day service, taken from the roof of The Corn Exchange, Bishop's Stortford (livery is cream / light blue). A weird co-incidence is the Stag furniture van parked up on Market Square - nothing to do with the bus service!



As I've never seen anything about this small Essex operator in EBN, might be time to correct that? (With pleasure - Editor.)

From the COLOUR Archives - Westcliff KPU 859

by Richard Delahoy

This month's archive shot ties in nicely with the newly published PSV Circle Fleet History of Westcliff and City, reviewed on pages 4-5. Another photo from **Frank Church's** precious 12-exposure roll of colour film shot in 1953, KPU 859 encapsulates much of the history of those fleets in the early 1950s. The bus was new to City Coach Company (in their brown livery) but carries Westcliff names on Eastern National style Tilling green livery. The Fleet History reveals that this bus, numbered B21, was one of no less than 18 Bedford OB buses added to the fleet between May and October 1946 and explains how, although the chassis were to the post-war specification rather than the earlier utility OWB version (the differences however were quite minor), the Mulliner bodies were still being built to the austere wartime Ministry of Supply requirements. The angular style is evident in the picture. Mulliner had not been a mainstream bus body builder but produced many bodies on OWBs during the war and continued to do so for Government departments and the Royal Air Force; City also took three on Commer Commando chassis. Originally petrol engined, 15 of the 18 OBs quickly acquired more economical Perkins P6 oil (i.e., diesel) engines. Curiously, the other three were sold off by City very early on, in 1949/50.

The surviving 15 were part of the fleet transferred to Westcliff when City's owners sold out in 1952 and as can be seen, was repainted into EN colours, being allocated fleet number 172 in the July 1954 renumbering that brought the Westcliff and Hicks fleets into a new EN numbering scheme. It then became part of the EN fleet proper in January 1955 and lasted until withdrawal in 1958, passing to scrap dealers. Not a bad life at all for a basic lightweight bus built in 1946.

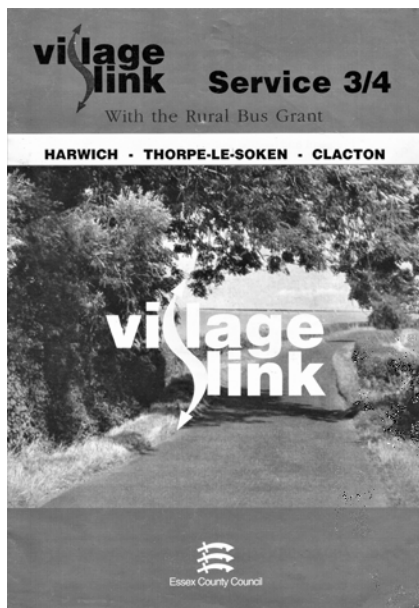
The bus is in Billericay High Street, just slowing for the junction with the A129 at Sun Corner. The building on the left is still standing but these days the junction is a roundabout rather than a crossroads (a photo taken just this month very nearby is on the front cover). The bus was new as B32F but modified to B30F at an unknown date, possibly by removing the double seat ahead of the front door alongside the driver.

During the war Campbells of Pitsea had received a similar looking OWB / Mulliner, JTW 382. It was last licenced in December 1955 and was derelict at the time of the Eastern National take-over of Campbells bus services, so was not acquired by EN. Essex County Council also took four Mulliner-bodied Bedford OBs in 1947-9, MTW 498, NNO 186, NVX 782 and NVX 822, presumably for schools' transport. They had post-war style bodies to a more pleasing appearance than the utility style.

In contrast to Frank's photo, below it is another small bus with a front engine and PU registration but delivered to Essex Buses in August 1996, almost exactly 50 years after KPU was new. **2682, P682 HPU**, ('682 for EBN 682', see also page 6) was a 23-seater Mercedes Benz 709D / Plaxton Beaver. It is seen about to depart from Harwich on 4 January 1999, working the 1135 service 4 to Clacton. This was the first day of operation of new Village Link services 3/4 Harwich - Clacton. The front cover of the original timetable booklet is shown right. The service continues to this day, although now only as a 3, the 4 variation was discontinued a while ago to give a more frequent service to the Meadowview Estate in Clacton on the 3 routing. Since July 2018 it has been worked by Hedingham after First Essex closed their Clacton depot. Sister vehicle to 2682, 2681, P681 HPU, was illustrated last month. In contrast to that photo taken in 1996, in 1999 2682 now has main 'First' fleet names, with 'Eastern National' relegated to a smaller subsidiary fleet name (and to disappear altogether within a few years), a side advert and 'Village Link' branding in the windscreen. **Robert Appleton**

Rear Cover Photo Captions

Red Wrightbus bodied Volvo B7RLEs. **Top:** Vectare's Eclipse Urban 2 BK13 NZR on Greater Anglia rail replacement at Shenfield, with its duty number displayed on its LED screen, 17 January 2021. In as-acquired Diamond Bus two-tone red livery. **Chris Stewart.** **Bottom:** Not previously illustrated in EBN is the new First Essex all red driver training livery. Eclipse Urban 66848 was the first to receive this. Driver trainers are normally based at Chelmsford, but, shortly after conversion and repaint, 66848 spent a couple of weeks at Basildon during the summer, as seen on 21 August 2020. **Steven Quy.** See also page 9.







ESSEX BUS NEWS

Issue 682

February 2021

Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964