

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 724 August 2024



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



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Above: Recently acquired, and repainted into new corporate livery before entering service, Enviro 400 33733 (SN12 AMV) is on route 87 in Colchester High Street, at the top of East Hill, on 24 June 2024, its first day of service with First Essex. **Peregrine Martin**

Below: London Bus Company Daimler Fleetline / Park Royal XF1 (CUV 51C), new to London Transport, was unusual on route 339 on 14 July 2024. It is seen in Shenfield Road, Brentwood. **Chris Stewart**





Above: The first three double-deckers at Basildon to receive the new corporate livery, Enviro 400 MMCs 33984 (SN65 OFZ), 33987 (SN65 OGC) and 33989 (SN65 OGE) were decorated on Friday 12 July in preparation for the final of Euro 2024 two days later. Unfortunately, football didn't come home.

Right: Two Basildon Enviro 400 MMCs in Urban 2 livery with white fronts were also decorated, 33991 and 33992, the latter which had just returned from loan to Chelmsford (see page 17). This is 33991 (SN65 OGG).

Both: Basildon depot, 12 July
Gareth Norris

Front Cover: A feature on First Essex and its predecessors in Clacton starts on page 26. 1756 (LIN 664P), a Leyland National 11351/1R, B49F, new in 1975, is at Jackson Road Bus Station in Clacton on 30 August 1981. The destination blind is set for one of the Clacton local routes, 114 Burrsville circular.

Robert Appleton



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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.

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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 725

Reports to Sub-Editors	17 August
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	23 August
Dispatch by Printers on or before	31 August

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent
up to 24th and will be included if possible, if not it will
be held over to the next month.

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

Welcome to New Member

F C Mann, Colchester - 978 (rejoined).

Bus trip from Southend to Brighton, Sunday 22 September 2024

Matthew Evans is organising another of his bus trips using a modern Ensignbus double-decker (most likely one of the coach-seated BCIs) to Brighton. Although primarily for former Southend Transport staff, Group Members are welcome to join, pick up points from Southend towards the Dartford Crossing can be arranged. Fare £15. To book, please message Matthew on 07746 779 414. Note that this is likely to be the last such 'long distance' excursion that Matthew runs.

Group Meetings

There are no meetings in July or August. Future meetings, at **The Quaker Meeting House**, Chelmsford, are:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 14 September | Alan Osborne - Picturesque Transport. A varied selection of views of buses, trolleybuses and trams in scenic locations (no garage yard shots!). Old and new, near and far, Essex and beyond. |
| 12 October | TBA (the previously announced speaker and topic postponed until 11 January). |
| 9 November | Robert Appleton - North Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside. |
| 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.

Sunday 4 August: Gosport Bus Rally, Stokes Bay.

Sunday 11 August: Eastern Counties Bus Preservation Group Big Bus Show, Stonham Barns Park Showground, Stonham Aspel IP14 6AT. 1000-1600. £7 Adult. Free bus service every 30 mins from Stowmarket Station. 85 entries so far.

Sunday 18 August: Lodge Coaches Classic Car & Bus, High Easter CM1 4QR.

Monday 26 August: Bus theme at Ipswich Transport Museum to celebrate 60 years of ADX 63B.

Sunday 1 September: Key Publishing Show Bus. Sywell Aerodrome, Northants NN6 0BN. £15 adult admission.

Sunday 8 September: Hertford Classic Bus Running Day. 1100-1700.

Saturday 14 September: Delaine Museum Open Day, Bourne. Noon-1600. £2.50 includes heritage bus ride.

Sunday 15 September: Essex Bus Rally, Garon Park, Southend. Details about how many vehicles are expected to attend are sketchy at the time of writing. (EBEG is not involved with the event.) If planning to attend, we recommend you check social media closer to the date, see <https://www.facebook.com/essexbusrally>.

Sunday 22 September: Amberley Museum, Sussex. Bus Show and Running Day.

Saturday 28-Sunday 29 September: Trolleybus Weekend, East Anglia Transport Museum, Carlton Colville. Twilight running on Saturday evening.

Sunday 29 September: Showbus. Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, Quainton HP22 4BY.

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.

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.

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

Follow Ups

EBM 722: Ensignbus Heritage Southend Seafront Services

Fred Lawrance writes:

It was good to see the heritage open top buses being used by Ensignbus in Southend and giving pleasure to those riding on them today. I have links to two of the vehicles, including a period of ownership of both.

I first became involved with Queen Mary BUF 426C after photographing it along with 416 & 425 parked at Henfield Depot (425 and 426 **opposite bottom**). The rest of the class were all stored at Horsham and were sold to Ensignbus. In March 1988 I took a day off from my real job and went to collect 416 & 426 for Harris Bus. Not known by many was the fact that the vehicles were exchanged for Artic units for conversion into towing vehicles.

I acquired 426 in February 2010 and owned it until November 2015. The reason for sale was an inability to get into the cab prior to knee replacement. But after sale to Panther Travel, I would act as conductor a couple of times each year.

With regard to Daimler Fleetline KMW 175P, I acquired this in December 2015 and returned it to Chris Pearce in May 2018. The fleet name I used, 'Shoreline Essex & Sussex', was a fake. My main memory of the bus was whenever I took it out it often rained and that it was slower on the main road than a PD3. I then exchanged it for HAC 628D a Leyland Leopard L2, which is now with my good friend Chris Sampson."

Below: BUF 426C on Southend Seafront near the Pier, en route to the Southend Bus Rally (so another link to EBM 722) on 4 June 1989, whilst in the ownership of Harris Bus and driven by myself.

Opposite page top: KMW 175P in Colchester on 24 June 2016, whilst in my ownership.

All photos **Fred Lawrance**







Above: Further to the photos taken in 2022 at Bath House car park, Walton-on-the-Naze, in EBM 722, here is a photo from over forty years earlier. Blue Triangle front entrance Routemaster 254 CLT, originally London Transport RMF1254 but sold to Northern General as 2145 in November 1966, renumbered 3129 in January 1975 and withdrawn in October 1980. Still in full Northern NBC livery. The same owner's RT786 (JXC 149) is behind. Sunday 23 August 1981. **Andrew Colebourne**

EBM 722: The Scania of First Essex Buses

Richard Delahoy writes:

I was interested to read the first part of Robert Appleton's story of First Essex's Scania's, and in particular his brief history of the Scania business. He mentioned their HQ and factory at Sodertalje in southern Sweden. I was privileged to visit that site in March 2011, leading a group of senior coach industry owners and managers in my role as administrator for the Guild of British Coach Operators.

As well as touring the factory and museum, the highlight of the stay was a visit to their extensive test track laid out in the surrounding countryside. Here there were a selection of (left-hand drive) buses, coaches and trucks for us to sample. I managed four drives, respectively a CNG-powered three-door OmniCity single decker, a Scania Touring coach with Higer body and then two trucks - an R440 rigid truck with a close coupled drawbar trailer and, the highlight for me, a P400 6x4 artic pulling a maximum length tri-axle trailer - a fabulous experience and the only time I've ever driven an articulated lorry. Happy days!

EBM 722: Routes 722

David Reynolds advises:

The first of the 722 routes, as illustrated on page 6 by London Transport D69, did not serve Romford per se, it ran via Becontree Heath to Roneo Corner. In later years it served Oldchurch Hospital, to Roneo Corner then to Hornchurch, etc.

EBM 722: Widdington

Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit writes:

Owen Woodliffe's photo in EBM 722 of Stephenson's Enviro 200 492 at the 'Fleur-de-Lys' pub transported me back almost six decades. Eastern National's service 304 between Saffron Walden and Elsenham, with short workings to Widdington, ran from 1957 until 1965. Diversions and extensions of other services led to its withdrawal. On Saturday 12 January 1965, the usual suspects from Head Office went in search of some of the last runs. Around lunchtime, Bishop's Stortford's Bristol LS / ECW 1236 (858 ETW) prepares to reverse at Widdington. The golden age of buses, with full destination blinds, and still crew operated. **Alan Tebbit**



EBM 720: WNO 484

We reported in EBM 720 that former Eastern National open top Bristol KSW / ECW 2386 (WNO 484) is now owned by New and Classic Travel Ltd of Swansea, and is used for private hires such as weddings. It remains in its (non-authentic) cream with red band United Welsh livery. It is seen at the Barry Island Festival of Transport on Sunday 9 June 2024. **Tony Gaze**





This article mentioned the 15 Bristol RELL6L / ECW purchased by Colchester Corporation in the 1970s. **Above** is a preserved example of one of the batch, OWC 722M in Blue Bus Services livery at the Stroud Vintage Bus Show on 22 June 2024. This was new to Colchester in December 1973, fleet number 22. **Ian Dann** Sister OWC 720M (which also later worked for Blue Bus Services) is also preserved. It was illustrated in EBM 690 (October 2021) under restoration by the Tyneside Heritage Vehicles group.

David Reynolds has pointed out that there were actually 18 trams, not 16 as reported. The final pair, cars 17 & 18, arrived in July 1906 after the Recreation Ground service started.

Roger Tuke adds some personal recollections:

"I remember my grandfather Samuel Robert Tuke (always known as Bob) when I was a child, having received the 1964 commemorative booklet at school, telling me that they were known as the "new cars" and that they had normal stairs, where the first 16 had reversed stairs. He had driven tramcars out of Magdalen Street depot, I believe from 1917 after being invalided out of WW1, and was definitely still driving on the last day of operation in 1929."

EBM 723: Eastern National's Bishop's Stortford Garage

Richard Delahoy writes:

Whilst we don't have room here to cover the full history of the garage, and an earlier site in the town, it's worth noting that it was actually built by the London General Omnibus Company (LGOC) on whose behalf the National Omnibus & Transport Co (NOTC – Eastern National's predecessor) operated various services. The South Street depot was opened in March 1926 and run by NOTC for both the General and the National services. It duly passed to London Transport in 1933 but was vacated by them in April 1934 and sold to Eastern National in June 1935. Operation of the 'General' routes by EN ceased in April 1932 but the garage continued to be shared until 1934. We touched on some aspects of the complicated arrangements at Bishop's Stortford in EBNs 597 (December 2013)

and 628 (August 2016). There's a lot more about the Watford & North London area operations of NOTC in the seminal "Years Between 1909-1969, Volume 1", Chapter 4 being devoted to the subject, and in Ken Glazier's "The Battles of the General" and "The Last Years of the General". It's a story waiting to be told in more detail one day!



The photo **above**, from August 1933, shows something of the character of the previous joint operation from the depot, with a now London General Country Services owned and operated AEC, NS1432 (XT 6060), on service N11 to Hertford and St Albans, alongside Eastern National 2384 (TW 8937) an ADC 416A / Strachan & Brown, new in 1927, side by side on the forecourt. **EBEG collection**

The LGOC connection remains today in that there are a number of manhole covers still there bearing the LGOC name, a close-up **below**. 18 June 2024. **Phil Covington**



EBM 723: Other Operators

It is confirmed that Edinburgh Bus Tours Volvo B5TL / Wrightbus part open topper, 232 (SJ16 CTU), was in Essex for conversion to electric propulsion by Kleanbus. With thanks to **Dave Arnold** and **Jack Bence**.

Last month we included a photo of Transport of Essex W26 WWW, a MAN TGL 12.250 MOBIPeople Midi Explorer, taken at Tesco at the Brookfield Centre, Cheshunt. [Editor's note: this was taken on 19 June 2024, I put March, apologies.] The photographer, **Allan White**, has provided some information about the Centre and buses serving it.

Long before Tesco arrived at Brookfield Farm, my walk to school in the 1950s took me down Brookfield Lane although at that time I was not aware that there was a farm nearby with the same name. At that time Brookfield Lane's main claim to fame was that it was the location of the training ground of Tottenham Hotspur Football Club. Moving on to the 1980s, the Brookfield Centre began life in 1983 as a large Tesco store at what was then still known as Brookfield Farm. At that time Tesco had its head office and warehouse in Delamare Road, Cheshunt, an

address that appeared on all of their own products until they moved to Welwyn Garden City. My Mum and Dad lived near to the shop and as Dad was a driver with Tesco they always shopped there. The shop was later expanded to become a 'Tesco Extra' (one of their largest) and a large M&S was opened alongside it with the name changing to the Brookfield Centre. Other shops were opened nearby and some have since changed hands but for some time our local council, the Borough of Broxbourne, have had plans to expand the site considerably. Time will tell if this ever goes ahead. At one time Tesco provided free bus services run by Sampson Coaches (two of which served places in Essex) and for a while M&S also provided one run by Golden Boy Coaches. Then at various times over the years a regular bus service has been provided by many varied companies to many various destinations. Always a good spot for the occasional bus photo. At the moment it is served by Central Connect (route 25 from Harlow, previously the 410 and before that the C4), Centrebus (with the new route 907 from Stevenage via Hertford) and Metroline (route 242 from Waltham Cross, now a local service but a remnant of London Transport trunk route 242).

Below: XTW 856S, a Bedford YMT with Duple B55F bodywork, new in January 1978 to Runwell Hospital (near Wickford), at Brookfield Farm on 18 July 1985 operating the free bus service with an ever present Tesco shopping trolley in the foreground! Sampson acquired this vehicle in July 1984, possibly via Ensignbus as a dealer, as it went to them when Sampson disposed of it in 1988. **Allan White**



As there is a little bit of space to fill on this page, **right** is something different, but hopefully of interest.

Allan continues:

YRO 401F, pictured with my Dad driving was, I believe, a Leyland Beaver unit with a 'York' trailer attached. This was new to Tesco in 1967/68 but by the time of the photo it was about 10 years old (at a guess) and had been downgraded to shunting duties up and down Delamare Road. Older vehicles often ended their working lives in this way as this was before the advent of specialised shunting vehicles which are used nowadays and in which the driver never needs to leave his cab. My Dad was in and out of his cab all day changing trailers but after many years on the road he now preferred the regular hours that came with shunting duties.



EBM 723: Heddingham History

Photos from the Group visit to Sible Heddingham depot on 16 June 2024 were included in last month's issue. Here is a photo taken at the depot 14 years previously, on 20 July 2010, Heddingham Omnibuses Leyland Lynx 2 L206 (J724 KBC) - the registration doubles for '**724 for EBM 724**'. The following year this bus moved to fellow Essex operator Regal Busways, numbered 103. It had been new to Westbus, Ashford in 1992. **Robert Appleton**



Service Revisions

Ian Ransom

Late news received on 26 July, two days before we went to print, is that Arrow Taxis Essex Ltd and Essex & Suffolk Dart CIC suddenly ceased trading on that date, citing losses of passenger numbers since 2020 and spiralling costs. We do not yet know what will happen to their routes, we will have more news next month.

Additional information and some corrections to Service Revisions from 28 July 2024 reported in EBM 723

Commercial Services

4 (Daily) Jaywick, Martello Beach - Clacton, Lymington Avenue **Heddingham**. Evening service revised to operate Jaywick, Martello Beach - Clacton, Pier Avenue as service **4**, following the same route as the daytime **4**, via Meadow Way. The current M-S evening service between Pier Avenue and Lymington Avenue revised to operate as **136A**.
4 (Su Only) Southend Travel Centre - Shoeburyness Renown **First Essex**. Additional commercial services (every 4 hours) introduced to supplement the ECC journeys on **4A**, which is now operated by **First Essex** on Su only.

5 (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Bockings Elm **Hedingham**. Revised timetable on Su only to improve punctuality, the 0925 on Su only revised to operate at 0911.

6/A/B (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Point Clear **Hedingham**. **6A** withdrawn on Su. Will now operate every two hours on Su as **6B**. No change to M-S service.

7A First Essex. See ECC route **7** below.

14/B (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Upshire Shops **Central Connect**. Service temporarily withdrawn, it is hoped that a small number of journeys will be reinstated from September.

16 (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Shernbrooke Road **Central Connect**. Increased to operate at generally every 30 minutes, with one evening journey on M-F, and increased from hourly to every 30 minutes on S daytime after 1000, still hourly before then.

16 (Sch Only) Old Heath, Speedwell Road - Colchester, St Helena School **Hedingham**. Renumbered 16B with no change to route or timetable.

18 (Sch Only) Ramsey Church / Parkeston, Una Road - Harwich Railway Station **Panther Travel**. Service withdrawn.

18/A/C (Daily) Loughton Station - North Weald, The Talbot / Ongar, Two Brewers **Central Connect**. Revised route and timetable. Last month's entry "418 renumbered 18" was not fully correct as there is already an 18. Service **18** will replace **418** (M-S) and **418B** (Su) between Loughton Station and Epping Hospital. The section of route between Harlow Bus Station and Epping on **418/B** is now covered by the enhanced service **20**.

19/A (M-S) Chelmsford Bus Station - Harlow Bus Station via North Weald and Epping **First Essex**. NEW SERVICE. Three journeys each way M-F. Correction to EBM 723, there is also one journey each way on **19A** on Saturdays. These services are positioning journeys for Harlow routes **4**, **14**, **407/417**.

20 (Daily) Ongar, Two Brewers - Harlow Bus Station via Harlow Brays Grove **Central Connect**. Replaces **420** with most journeys now operating Ongar, Two Brewers - Harlow Bus Station every 30 minutes on M-F, hourly on S and Su. Previously this was hourly, which, combined with journeys on **420A** Harlow Bus Station - North Weald, The Talbot, provided a bus generally every 30 minutes over this section on M-F. Saturday was hourly and Sunday two-hourly. The previous M-S short journeys on the current route **20** in Harlow operated by **Vectare** are withdrawn.

21 (M-S) Harlow Bus Station - Epping Station via Harlow, Tumbler Road **Central Connect**. NEW SERVICE. Operates every 30 minutes on M-F and every 60 minutes on S. Together with the **20** provides a bus every 15 minutes on M-F and every 30 minutes on S between Harlow and Epping, although with slightly different routes in Harlow.

22 (SX) Harlow Bus Station - Epping Station via Harlow, Brays Grove **Central Connect**. NEW SERVICE. Infrequent journeys which operate via North Weald, rather than Thornwood Common.

22B (M-F) Harlow Bus Station - Potter Street, Red Lion **Central Connect**. NEW SERVICE evenings only and in this direction only.

24 (M-S) Harlow Bus Station - River Way, circular **Central Connect**. NEW SERVICE operates every 30/60 minutes on M-F between 0800 and 1900, and S between 0900-1600.

50/A (M-S) **First Essex**. See ECC route **50/A** below.

75 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - Maldon Leisure Centre **First Essex**. Additional short journeys introduced on Su only (and on August Bank Holiday Monday, 26 August) during school holidays between Colchester Bus Station and Colchester Zoo.

84 (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Sudbury Bus Station **Hedingham**. Enhanced M-S and Sunday service introduced, with BSIP+ funding from the UK Government via Suffolk County Council.

97/A/98/A (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Walton, The Naze **Hedingham**. Minor timetable changes on Su only to improve punctuality.

97B (Daily) Clacton, Hedingham Depot - Walton, The Naze **Hedingham**. 0849 ex Clacton on Sunday retimed to 0844, on Saturday the 2324 ex Walton is withdrawn.

136/137 (Daily) Clacton Shopping Village - Clacton, Pier Avenue **Hedingham**. Revised timetable on Su only to improve punctuality, some additional journeys introduced on M-S, including a later journey at 2300 from Clacton.

300 (Daily) Basildon Bus Station - Chelmsford Bus Station **First Essex**. Further to EBM 723, revised timetable is for M-F school holidays only.

336 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - South Woodham Ferrers (Daily) **First Essex**. Revised timetable on Sunday, plus 1835 ex Chelmsford and 1918 ex South Woodham Ferrers withdrawn.

784 (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Sudbury Bus Station **Hedingham**. Enhanced M-S and Sunday service introduced, with BSIP+ funding from the UK Government via Suffolk County Council.

D6/A (M-F) West Hanningfield, Temple Grove - Maldon Tesco **Arrow Taxis**. Service withdrawn.

Essex County Council Supported Services

(operators from 28 July shown, where a route has changed operator details were in EBM 723 apart from routes 322/3/4 where information wasn't available last month)

2 (M-S Eve and Su) Harlow Bus Station - Staple Tye, circular **Central Connect**. Additional journey on SuO at 0638 from Harlow Bus Station.

5 (M-S) Harlow Bus Station - Sumners Farm **Central Connect**. Minor timetable changes, together with additional morning peak and evening journeys on M-S, three journeys introduced on Su.

7 (M-S Eve) Rayleigh Railway Station - Hockley Spa / Southend Travel Centre **First Essex**. To correct EBM 723, the section between Hockley Spa and Southend Travel Centre has not been withdrawn and is exactly the same as the previous **Stephensons** contract, with the addition of the positioning (commercial) Hadleigh trips as 7A (1908 Hadleigh-Hockley and 2339 Rayleigh-Hadleigh).

14 (M-F) Stanway Sainsbury's - Hythe Tesco **Hedingham**. To correct EBM 723, this only ran M-F with **First Essex** (as **4**).

17/A (Daily) Loughton Station - Debden Station, circular (formerly **542/A**) **Central Connect**. No change to previous timetable except a 17A introduced at 1925 from Debden and a small number of journeys introduced on Sundays.

21 (M-S) Black Notley, Bulford Lane - Braintree Bus Station **Stephensons**. Further to EBM 723, the Saturday service will also be replaced by **ECC DigiGo** demand responsive service.

39 (M-S) Witham, Collingwood Road - Witham, Flora Road, circular. The Saturday service operated by **First Essex** is withdrawn. No change to the M-F service operated by **Stephensons**.

50/A (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Tollesbury Square **First Essex**. Further to EBM 723, some journeys will be operated commercially.

59/590 (M-S) Audley End Railway Station - Saffron Walden Elizabeth Way. As reported in EBM 723 operation passes to **Stephensons** (who were operating under a short term contract), it was also being operated by **Central Connect**. The **Central Connect** journeys ceased after operation on 19 July.

61/C (M-S) Blackmore Bus Terminus - Brentwood High Street **NIBS**. Further to EBM 723, the service will return to serving Plovers Mead, Wyatts Green (M-F only), this section had previously been withdrawn due to poorly parked cars. All journeys will now operate to & from Brentwood High Street as **61** and the Railway Station (previous **61C** journeys) will no longer be served.

74B (M-S) Clacton - Colchester Bus Station **Hedingham**. To correct EBM 723, the Clacton terminus with **First Essex** was Jackson Road not Pier Avenue.

76 (Su Only) Clacton - Colchester Bus Station **Hedingham**. To correct EBM 723, the Clacton terminus with **First Essex** was Jackson Road not Pier Avenue.

80/A/81/A (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Boxted / Manningtree Station **Hedingham**. Additional information to EBM 723 is that there will be some slightly later journeys.

305 (M-S) Bishop's Stortford Interchange - Stansted Airport **Central Connect**. Additional short journeys on M-S at 0618 from Takeley to Stansted and at 2128 from Stansted to Takeley.

322 (Tu only) Bishop's Stortford Interchange - Lindsell and ...

323 (M-S) Bishop's Stortford Interchange - Great Dunmow, David Wright Close and ...

324 (M-S) Bishop's Stortford Interchange - Stebbing, Ruffles Place. Operation of these three routes was due to pass from **Central Connect** to **Arrow Taxis**, details awaited of a replacement operator.

407/417 (M-S) Old Harlow, Aspen Way - Harlow, Princess Alexandra Hospital / Harlow Bus Station (M-S) **First Essex**. NEW SERVICES. Operates hourly from 0605-2305, generally as **407** in daytime (the 0805 journey from Aspen Way operates as a **417** via Little Parndon), operates via Little Parndon as **417** in the evenings, these replace and enhance the evening journeys on the **6** previously operated by **Arriva**. To clarify, although the 6 is a circular service, the 407 & 417 are not.

703 (M-F) Chelmer Valley Park & Ride - Broomfield Hospital **Essex County Council**. NEW SERVICE (although similar services have operated in the past). Every 30 minutes. First bus 0630 ex Chelmer Valley, last bus 1945 from Broomfield Hospital.

C11 (Daily) Chelmsford Railway Station - Beaulieu Park, Beaulieu Gardens **First Essex**. On Sundays the 2228 ex Chelmsford is withdrawn.

DaRT 29 (Tu Only) Saffron Walden Circular via Linton. We reported last month that this service had been deregistered by **Arrow Taxis** but there was no information in the ECC tender update. It is confirmed as withdrawn; it last ran on Tuesday 23 July.

Adam Kelleher

New Vehicles

The electric vehicles on order for Basildon towards the end of next year (see EBM 720) have been announced as 31 Yutong E12 single-deckers and 24 Yutong U11DD double-deckers. They will be supplied by Yutong UK importer Pelican Bus & Coach.

Acquired Vehicles

33697 entered service on 1 July in two-tone orange / red livery, but with First Leicester 'Frequent Fourteens' branding removed. 33728 entered service the same day, after repaint from the same livery into new corporate colours. See photos on pages 18-19. To confirm, all of 33697, 33728 and 33733 have moquette seats.

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 3 2024/25 (26 May - 29 June) - additional to EBM 723

37015 CR (oos)-Disposal

Period 4 2024/25 (30 June - 27 July)

32642 CR (oos)-Disposal, 33411 BN (oos)-BN, 33689 CR (oos)-CR, 33697 CF (oos)-CF, 33728 CR (oos)-CR, 36839 CF-CF (oos), 37062 CR-CR (oos), 44080 BN-CF, 47680 CR (loan)-CR (oos), 63342 BN-BN (oos), 63381 BN-BN (oos), 63464 HH (oos)-HH, 67805 CF (oos)-CF, 69430 CF (oos)-Disposal

Disposals

June 2024: 37015

1 July 2024: 32642 to Wigley, Carlton (towed away from Quayside Depot, Colchester by a Trevor Wigley & Son wrecker).

10 July 2024: 69430 towed away from Westway Depot, Chelmsford for scrap following its RTC. Further to EBM 721, both 44908 and 66817 went to PVS, Carlton for scrap.

Repaints - see pages 18-19.

Below: Enviro 200 MMC 67193 (SN66 WKP) on route X10 in Duke Street, Chelmsford on 2 July 2024, still with route X20 branding. **Adam Kelleher**



Services from 28 July 2024 - Some Commentary and Trivia

Very significant is that the loss of the ECC 74B and 76 means that First Essex no longer serve Clacton, once a National / Eastern National / First Essex stronghold - the companies have served the town since 1920. An article on First Essex and predecessors services in Clacton begins on page 26. Part 2 next month will cover the gradual reduction of services by FE since they closed Clacton depot in July 2018.

The loss of the ECC 174/175 means First Essex no longer serve Fingringhoe near Colchester, they had done so back to Eastern National days. On the plus side, FE have returned to Harlow, including running local town services.

The loss of ECC routes 21 and 104 in the Basildon area, and 80A in the Colchester area, means that there is no longer duplication of these fleet numbers within First Essex. But there are now two route 4s; although First Essex has lost route 4 in Colchester, it has gained journeys on route 4 in Harlow and routes 4/A in Southend.

First Essex has lost some route 14 (Chelmsford / Wickford Station - Wickford Tesco) journeys, with the ones that remain being renumbered 13B, but gained route 14 in Harlow. Just to expand a little on the changes to the Wickford route 14 reported in 'Service Revisions' last month. The main service from Chelmsford to Wickford Tesco, operated by First Essex Chelmsford depot before 28 July, including daytime shorts from Wickford Station to Wickford Tesco, remains with First Essex and is renumbered 13B. The peak hour (M-F only) shorts between Wickford Station and Wickford Tesco, operated by First Essex Hadleigh depot before 28 July, remain as 14 and are transferred to NIBS. Thus the 13B shorts and 14 are exactly the same.

New route S5 (Colchester Bus Station - Greenstead Library via Harwich Road) is in competition with existing Arriva route 1 between the city centre and Greenstead. This route number has been vacant since the shuttle routes were introduced in April 2022.

New route 19A reintroduces use of the bus stop outside Westway Depot for the first time for a few years (the pole remains but the flag has been removed) although you would need to get up early to use it, journeys from there are at 0536 and 0636 M-F and 0611 Saturdays!

Routes 67 (Thursdays only), 69A (Tuesdays only), 79 (Fridays only), 85 (Wednesdays only) and 92 (Wednesdays only), all with only one or two journeys each way per day, are shown on the same timetable, entitled "Colchester Shoppers". Note, the main route 92 is a Monday to Saturday service, Colchester - Tollesbury, operated by Hedingham. The one extra morning journey and afternoon return on Wednesdays only, short from Colchester to Layer Bretton, is what has transferred to First Essex, the rest of the service remains with Hedingham.

Route 256 (Ramsden Heath - Basildon) has been withdrawn. Nowadays it had been a tendered service and reduced to only operating one journey each way (plus an additional short am journey from Dunton to Billericay Railway Station) on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays only. It had only returned to First Essex (successor to Eastern National) in July 2022. As can be seen **below, courtesy of the Bus Archive**, the route number had been a remarkable survivor of the 1950s numbering of ex-City routes. (Route 251 survives but in much reduced form.)

from 29th July 2024

greater buses for Greenstead

S4 every 10 mins Mondays to Saturdays (plus a Friday 10 mins off-peak service)

NEW S5 every 12 mins Mondays to Saturdays

11 times an hour

Parsons Heath

Greenstead

Hythe Tesco

Colchester city centre

shuttles First Bus

£2 one way

REVISIONS IN SERVICES commencing 24th MAY, 1953

Revised Services will be introduced on the following ex "CITY" routes:—

251 LONDON (Wood Green) — BRENTWOOD — BILLERICAY — RAYLEIGH — SOUTHCEND-ON-SEA
All journeys will operate via Runwell and Battlesbridge (Local journeys between Wickford and Rawreth (Carpenters Arms) via Shotgate will be provided on this Service and on Service 253)

252 BRENTWOOD — HUTTON (Bracken Bank) — Certain journeys will operate via Shenfield **PRIESTS LANE**

253 BRENTWOOD — BILLERICAY — WICKFORD — RAWRETH — Service extended to "Carpenters Arms" with Revised and Increased Frequency

255 BRENTWOOD — BILLERICAY — LT. BURSTEAD — LAINDON
Journeys extended to and from Brentwood on Saturday evenings

256 BILLERICAY — SUNNYMEDE ESTATE — Revised Time Table

New Time Table Booklets showing all Services available (price 1/-) at Company's Offices

W.M.S. 46/2383 Head Office: New Writtle Street, Chelmsford. "Phone: 3431 (4 lines) Local Office: 17/21 London Road, Southend-on-Sea. "Phone: 49411

Around the Depots

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

British Grand Prix at Silverstone Weekend 5-7 July 2024

This year a contract was secured by First Travel Solutions for part of the shuttle work. Other shuttle work was undertaken by Stagecoach. First Bus had buses from all over the country participating. From First Essex, 33425, 33981, 33983-88 came from Basildon depot, 33994-95/97-98, 34424-26 from Chelmsford and 33728, 34421-23, 37613 from Colchester.

Last Days

Some reports of last days of workings on ECC contracts that ceased to be operated by First Essex from the 28 July changes (not all necessarily the last journeys those days and not all routes recorded).

Sunday 21st: Colchester: 47656 on 76.

Friday 26th:

Colchester: 47679 on 4, 47427 & 63334 on 11

Basildon: 67194 on 106 (sister route 104 not recorded), 47652 on 552

Hadleigh: 44927 on 14 (peaks).

Saturday 27th:

Colchester: 37037 on 74B, 47668 on 80/A, 47679 on 81/A, 37016 on 82B, 47430 on 83/B, 47667 on 174/175

Chelmsford: 44081 on 39 & 40

Basildon: 47655 on 256

Hadleigh: 44927 on 21 (Basildon - North Benfleet)

Colchester

Enviro 400 33688 has received a blue based super rear advert for 'County Broadband'.

News of the Harwich routes (29 June-26 July, all dates July).

Most journeys are worked by Wrightbus StreetLites or Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse saloons. Double-deckers continued to reach Harwich a few times: 1725 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1900 Harwich - Colchester 102 worked by 37004 (1st), 33687 (16th), 33670 (18th). 2035 Colchester - Harwich 102 worked by 37135 (1st), 33687 (10th). 33686 made a rare Saturday appearance on 13th working from 1135 Colchester - Harwich 104 to 1608 Harwich - Colchester 104. On 18th, 33718 worked 1435 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1615 return, and on 23rd 32673 worked 1910 Colchester - Mistley 102.

In previous school holidays, the 0915 Mistley - Colchester 104 was worked by a double-decker off service 75, but from the start of the summer school holidays on 22nd, this journey was worked by a single-decker off service S4. The three ADL Enviro 200 MMCs allocated to Colchester have also reached Harwich: 67189 in Airlink livery on 15th and 24th; 67190 also in Airlink livery on 3rd-4th, 8th, 11th, 17th and 67197 in black ex Park & Ride livery on 14th-17th, 19th-20th, 22nd, 26th.

Clacton routes.

Reported on route 74B this period have been: 32672 (20th), 33668 (9th), 33670 (11th-12th), 33689 (13th), 33690 (5th, 26th), 33733 & 37037 (6th), 33733 again (18th), Remembrance liveried 33825 (23rd), Airlink liveried 34421 (3rd), 37004 (19th), 37007 (25th, bringing an Eastern National livery back to Clacton one last time), 37037 again (27th, so the last First Essex bus to serve Clacton), 37054 (17th), 37134 (22nd), 37140 (4th), 37613 (10th), 63312 (8th), 63335 (2nd), 63337 (1st).

Route 76: 47697 (7th), 47697 again & 63335 (14th), 47656 (21st, last day).

And that's it for First Essex routes in Clacton.

There continue to be standard double-deckers operating alongside the Airlink liveried vehicles on route X20. Noted in July: Enviro 400s 33663 (5th), 33669 (3rd, 5th-6th, 10th-11th, 13th-15th), 33676 (12th), 33680 (7th), 33687 (17th, 20th-21st, 24th, 27th), 33692 (5th-7th, 11th, 13th, 16th, 18th-22nd, 24th-26th), 33713 (2nd, 7th, 12th-13th, 18th, 23rd) plus Volvo B9TL / Geminis 37140 (7th, 9th-10th), 37613 (1st, 8th-9th, 13th-14th, 17th-18th, 21st-24th, 26th), 37621 (24th). Also, one non Airlink single-decker, Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 2 69519 (25th).

Single-deckers on route 320: 47656 (11th), 47669 (23rd) and 63337 (26th).

Chelmsford

Not picked up last month is that when 33987 returned to Basildon from loan on 25 June, it was replaced at Chelmsford by Basildon's 33992. Both 33992 and Chelmsford's 47604 returned to their home depots on 12 July.

On 9th, 69430 remained the only vehicle on the scrap line, it was being cannibalised for parts. But then the next day it was towed away for scrap. The whereabouts of 44473, which has been out of service since last November, is not known.

Driver Trainers 66860 and 69148 have again been on loan at Norwich. However, on the afternoon of 11th, the former was seen in the depot at Westway, as were 66848, 66863, 66886, 69151 and 69155 and the other one, 66846, was seen on driver training on Parkway, Chelmsford.

Standard examples of Enviro 400 MMCs remain in use on route X30, noted have been all of 33994-33998 plus on loan from Basildon 33992 (3rd-6th, 9th). Less usual were Enviro 400s 33656 (5th, 8th, 19th, 26th), orange 33697 (6th, 9th), 33705 (13th) and 33714 (5th). Three single-deckers on 6th, 67163, 69431 and 69433 (whilst 34424-6 and some other double-deckers were at Silverstone).

67735 on X30 (1st). 67805 a single-decker on 372 (23rd).

Basildon

33568 (11th), 44080 (25th, its last day at BN before moving to CF) and 44909 (12th) on X10 shorts. 44909 on 9 (25th). 47604 on 561 (11th). 63343 (16th) and 63383 (3rd) on 625. 67168 on 9 (6th). Some Airlink liveried Enviro 200 MMCs again on 104/106 up until these routes were lost on retender at the end of July.

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Stephen Barham, Jack Benec, Ryan Hannah, Gareth Norris, John Podgorski, Daniel Pretty, Ian Ransom, Roger A Smith, Derek Stebbing, Andrew Toms, Robert West, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group, the PSV Circle and Terminus.

Below: First Essex StreetLite 47630 (SN15 ADU) laying over on route 20 at Southend Travel Centre on 6 June 2024. The big birds mural is apparently Thai inspired and is titled "Out Goes the Light". It was painted by Rob Aspire, 'The Birdman', as part of 'Southend City Jam 2023'. The bird on the left is a Great Tit, the other is a Yellow-cheeked Tit, which is native to south east Asia. **Andrew Colebourne**



First Essex News in Pictures

Almost certainly the most photographed bus in Essex during the first week of July 2024, 33697 (SN12 AHC) seen on its first day of service with First Essex, 1 July, after being driven down from Leicester the day before. First Leicester 'Frequent Fourteen' branding has been removed from this attractive livery. On route 372 to Colchester, but departing from stand 5 in Chelmsford Bus Station rather than its designated stand 3.

William Morrison

Also at Chelmsford Bus Station, but the following day, 33697 ready to leave on the 1520 170 to Braintree...

Robert Appleton

... and a few minutes later, a few yards further down Duke Street.

Derek Stebbing

Correction to previous two EBMs: as can be seen from these photos, the First Leicester 'Frequent Fourteens' livery was two shades of orange at the front and middle with red at the rear, rather than three shades of orange.

Repaints

33697 then went for repaint after service on 20 July and was back at Westway in new corporate livery on 26th.



33987, the first vehicle to receive new corporate livery, received stripes and fleet names in early July. This was then followed by 33984.

33989 has been repainted from First Glasgow Urban with gold relief into the new livery. It returned to Basildon Depot on 9 July.

Enviro 300 67805 has had its accident repairs completed (see EBM 720) and has been repainted into corporate livery at ADL. It returned to Westway Depot, Chelmsford on 8 July and re-entered service on 10th.

Top Right: Enviro 400 33728 (SN12 ALO) was acquired in the same livery as 33679, but, unlike 33679, it did not enter service in orange, instead it went straight to repaint into corporate livery. It is seen on route 75 at Colchester Road, Heybridge on 9 July 2024.

Dave Arnold

Middle & Bottom Right: Enviro 300 67805 (SN13 CPE) at Westway Depot, Chelmsford on 9 July. On the nearside it has sensibly had its fleet name applied to the cove panels as there is an advert frame on the lower panels, on the offside it is in normal larger size on the lower panels as there isn't an advert frame (due to the position of the emergency exit). Both **Jack Benee**



Acquired Vehicles

824	YN07 UOF	Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka	H47/28F	Ex Brighton & Hove 673
827	YN57 FYB	Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka	H47/28F	Ex Brighton & Hove 679
829	YN57 FYD	Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka	H47/28F	Ex Brighton & Hove 676

Below: 824 on Harwich Station Approach on 22 July 2024, working school contract M1 from Manningtree High School. Fleet number 824 in white can just be seen on the front dash, as can the ghosting of its previous fleet name and number. Its B&H name, 'Isambard Kingdom Brunel', has been retained. **Robert Appleton**



Updated fleet numbering of the ex-Brighton & Hove Scania / OmniDekkas:

824 YN07 UOF	829 YN57 FYD
825 YN07 UOG	830 YN57 FYE
826 YN57 FYA	831 YN57 FYJ
827 YN57 FYB	832 YN57 FYL was 828
828 YN57 FYC was 832	

Withdrawn Vehicles - Status Update

- 256 (EU55 BWC) ADL Dart Pointer - reportedly withdrawn at CN.
- 514 (LB02 YXF) Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini - sent for scrap w/c 24 June 2024.
- 876 (PN09 ENF) Scania N230UD / Optare Olympus - burnt out and destroyed in June as reported in EBM 723.

The second ADL Dart / Optare Esteem in store at CN that was never converted to a trainer, LX09 AZC, has reportedly been scrapped.

Significant Allocations

528 CN - KN by week commencing 23 June, still active at KN w/c 22 July.
824 CNu - CN working on service 76 by 2 July.

Fleet News

824 (YN07 UOF), 829 (YN57 FYD) and 831 (YN57 FYJ) all entered service on 1 July, 827 (YN57 FYB) following on 6 July, all from Clacton. It is believed that YN57 FYM, reported as an acquisition in EBM 722, was rejected due to mechanical issues on arrival with Go East Anglia. It arrived in early May but has not been allocated a fleet number. It appears that 828 and 832 have swapped fleet numbers to numerically bring the vehicle registrations in series order.

As of 23 July the remaining unaccounted Brighton & Hove Scania N270UDs were YN07 UOT/U, which were either in reserve or still operational with B&H, and YN57 FYO which had left the Brighton fleet but whereabouts unknown. As an item of interest, 823 (YN56 FFC) has Optare branded safety glass, the vehicle was registered in September 2006, eleven months before the Darwen Group takeover, or nearly two years before Optare reverse takeover from Darwen.

Vehicles long-term off-road July 2024: 258/276/287/457/458/511/512/517/521/524/602/806/828/875.
258 has started parts reclaim. 276 was still in engineering at Clacton depot on 4 July.
510 seemed to have a brief reprieve on schools duty local to Sible Hedingham.

Other News

On 29 June the Hedingham driver trainer 9273 (LX09 AZP) supported Clacton Pride event.

On 5 July a double-decker visited Jaywick Little Pals nursery to take two groups of young children on a seafront bus ride as part of community engagement.

Hedingham & Chambers took over the Sudbury - Hadleigh route from Beestons Coaches on 22 July adding the route to the Sudbury hub of services. The route, which was operated by Eastern Counties before being taken over by Beestons, was originally numbered 91 and ran through to Ipswich. Now truncated to Sudbury - Hadleigh only as the 90 and to run roughly every two hours Mon - Sat. The Hadleigh - Ipswich section remained service 91 and will continue to be run by Beestons. The 90 section of the route was nearly cut in 2023 but extra funding was allocated to keep the service running despite low usage, especially on Saturdays. I understand that Beestons did not enter into the £2 fare cap scheme and this has seen patronage fall away, but that Hedingham & Chambers are including this route under the fare cap scheme and with the links to the Sudbury hub of services are hoping to see an increase in usage. Most of the buses will link up with Beestons timings (allowing 10-15 minutes grace) to allow travel between Sudbury and Ipswich by means of the two services. This will mean Hedingham & Chambers serving Boxford, they already serve Hadleigh with the Wednesday only services 379 & 461 between Bury St Edmunds (379) and Whatfield (461). The first day of service saw coverage from the 870-7 batch of Scania's.

From 28 July, service 84 is having additional funding allocated from the Bus Service Improvement Plan + from the UK Government via Suffolk County Council to enhance the route. Journeys are increased, later running for commuters, and increased buses on Saturday.

Regarding our comment last month that it would be good if one day 825 (the Hedingham bus named 'John Constable') worked school contract 694, Langham - East Bergholt High School, this cannot now happen as from the new school term commencing Monday 2 September 2024 this contract transfers to First Essex.

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



Acquired Vehicle

AEC Routemaster RM2151 (CUV 151C) from the estate of Mr D McMaster for the heritage fleet, June 2024.

Repaints

Further to EBM 722, the Ayats badge has been reinstated to the front of 370, with the Ensignbus fleet name that had replaced it after repaint removed.

With thanks to John Lidstone and LOTS.



Ian Ransom

On the last day of Panther Travel, 27 July, MPD BIG 9856, Primo SB07 PAN and Enviro 200 VB08 PAN were in service on route 2. Also, ex-Eastern National Leyland National 1924 (JHJ 150V) operated additional free services on the route.

Below: On 16 July 2024 Panther Travel were using BIG 9856 (ex X346 YGU) Dennis Mini Pointer Dart on service 2 Harwich - Parkeston Circular. It is seen turning from Kingsway onto Marine Parade in Dovercourt with Group Member Stephen Barham driving. Unfortunately the destination display was not caught by the camera. **Robert Appleton**

Later Robert rode on Panther Travel services Harwich - Parkeston Circular 2, Harwich - Ramsey 18, Ramsey - Harwich - Parkeston 118, and Parkeston - Harwich 18, all with BIG 9856 and Stephen driving. It was clear how much passengers, both young and old, valued Panther Travel.





Above: Enviro 200 VB08 PAN (ex CU08 ADZ) at the Parkestone depot on 22 July 2024, during the last week of Panther operation. Details of this bus were in EBM 718 (February 2024). To its right is Plaxton Primo SBO7 PAN which was illustrated in EBM 716. **Robert Appleton.** Later that week this bus was named 'Adam and Diane' by staff members in respect of all the hard work owners Adam and Diane Barham have done for the company.



Richard Delahoy

Colchester

A second Mercedes-Benz Sprinter with MB B17F body, 1002 (BT66 UAN), was transferred to Colchester from Northfleet in early July. It joins existing 1009 (BF67 WGD). Both are primarily intended for use as staff shuttle buses, but due to roadworks affecting the 133 (see below), 1009 had seen almost daily use on a few trips on 133 from June 24 until 13 July, filling in for gaps caused by late running.

Those roadworks had closed part of the 133 route, between Felsted (near the old sugar beet factory) and Little Dunmow. As a result, buses had to double back from Felsted all the way to the old A120 at Blake End and then follow the old A120 towards Dunmow, adding about a net six miles to the route and inevitably causing late running.

On 20 July, a Mercedes-Benz Citaro, 3906 (BD12 DHO) was borrowed from Tunbridge Wells to conduct route tests and to test access to the depot at Grange Way (which has a steep slope at the entrance and can cause grounding issues). The tests were successful and it remains to be seen whether any will come to Colchester as part of the dispersion of the High Wycombe and Aylesbury fleets upon the closure of those depots. Stop Press: as we went to print (on 28 July) some buses were arriving from those closed depots, details to follow next month.

Southend

For the service revisions from 28 July, a new timetable booklet has been produced and is available online at <https://tinyurl.com/sdpncy3k>. Somewhat surprisingly, a small run of printed copies has also been produced and these were handed out at the Travel Centre on 17 July but it is thought that all went very quickly.

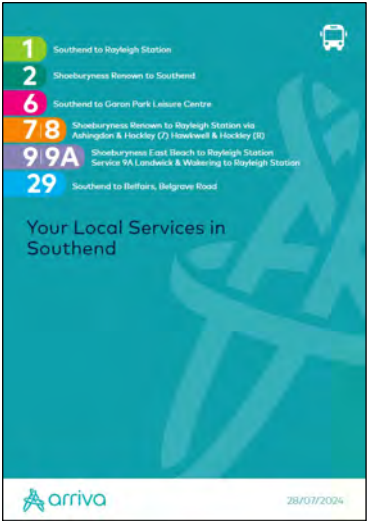
Further to EBM 721 & 722, Enviro 400 MMC 6502 (SN66 WHV) was after all a loan to Ware rather than a transfer and it was back at Southend towards the end of July.

The final two VDL SB200s allocated to Southend, 3761/3779, were due for withdrawal in July (3779 was last in service on 11th, but 3761 was still in use on 27th).

Harlow

Driver Shuttle bus, Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 1012 (BF67 WGJ), has transferred to Ware.

With thanks to Adam Kelleher, Keith Sadler and LOTS.



Below: From 28 July, Arriva have cut back all but six M-F journeys on route 59 from Harlow to & from Chelmsford Railway / Bus Station, rather than carrying on to Anglia Ruskin University. Enviro 200 MMC 4078 (YX17 NGO), branded for routes 508, 509 & 510, is seen at the University on 21 June 2024. **David Moth**



New Vehicles

The seating capacity of 357-371 is B30F.

Correction to last month, the first two obviously entered service on 25 June, not July.

Disposals

Further to last month, Enviro 200 MMC 333 was a fifth disposal to Red Rose Travel, Aylesbury. They now have ex 331-4/6.

Repaints

Enviro 200 MMC 349 from all white to new Central Connect livery (although it re-entered service without fleet names or other vinyls).

Other Vehicle News

Scania OmniCity double-deckers 596/99 (YP59 OEO/V) were withdrawn from service in late June. These were the last two of the type in use.

Mercedes-Benz Tourismo 415 (W15 VEC) has been noted at Flagfinders.

With thanks to LOTS.



Richard Delahoy

New Vehicles

The five ADL E40D / Enviro 400 MMCs are to be numbered 801-5, the first pair being EU24 LWT/V (801/2), which have been allocated to Haverhill depot, principally for use on routes 12 (Newmarket - Cambridge) and 16 (Newmarket - Bury St Edmunds). They seat 86, H51/35F, plus 15 standing, so their capacity will be useful on school / college journeys. They have high-backed Lazzerini seats, trimmed in Stephensons' blue moquette, with seatback USB charging points.

Adverts have appeared for drivers at a new base in the Harlow area for operation of Harlow / Bishop's Stortford area routes initially. Further details to follow.

Other Operators

Roger A Smith

Acme Bus, Widdington

Recently acquired is MX08 DHC, an Optare Solo M950 SL, B31F, whilst YJ54 UBX, an Optare Solo M920, B33F, has gone to Mulleys, Ixworth, Suffolk.

Arrow Taxis, Maldon

AE57 BYW, a Euromotive B15FL bodied Iveco, has gone to a private buyer in Witham.

As noted in 'Service Revisions' above, this company suddenly ceased trading on 26 July.

Foster Hartley, Wethersfield

FJ11 RBF, a Volvo B9R with Caetano C53F body, has gone to Smiths Coaches, Liskeard, Cornwall.

Hailstone, Wickford

Erduman bodied DAF LF HT24 BUS (C37FL) was brand new here in June and is named "Monsoon".

Lodge Coaches, High Easter

YJ62 FXA, an Optare Solo M970, B34F, is here from Weardale, Stanhope, Durham.

With thanks to the PSV Circle.

First Essex & Predecessors in Clacton Robert Appleton

This article covers the end of First Essex services in Clacton between July 2018 and July 2024 but before that gives a brief overview of the history leading up to those dates.

Part 1: 1920 - Late 1980s

The National Steam Car Company started running its steam buses in London in 1909. They were replaced by petrol buses in 1918. They had Essex operations from July 1913 onwards at Chelmsford. In 1920 the company was renamed the 'The National Omnibus & Transport Company Ltd'. Expansion into different parts of the country followed. A Colchester to Clacton via Weeley service started in 1920, and a small depot was opened at Wash Lane in Clacton, from where a thriving coach business was built. However, National had no other local services in the Clacton area, which was well served by other operators.

After the grouping of the railways in 1923, the four railway companies, London & North Eastern, London Midland & Scottish, Great Western, and Southern moved in 1928 to invest in bus companies. NOTC and the respective railway companies thus became equal 50% shareholders in the newly created Eastern, Western, and Southern National companies. Eastern National started trading in 1930 and in February 1931 Thomas Tilling Ltd acquired a controlling financial interest of the three National companies.

Eastern National expanded in the Clacton area by acquiring the Silver Queen Omnibus Service and Enterprise Bus Co (Clacton) in 1931, adding 28 routes and 69 vehicles. Silver Queen had a depot in Castle Road, Clacton, and bus stands in Rosemary Road, Clacton, where Enterprise were also based. The Silver Queen depot in Castle Road became Eastern National's Clacton depot. The original National garage in Wash Lane was redeveloped as a coach park (see photo on rear cover).

Below: NO 2071 was a Leyland Subsidy A with an unidentified O36RO body. It entered service in 1921 with Clacton & District Motor Service Ltd who traded as Silver Queen (which later became the company name). It had a chassis bought from the War Office which probably dated to c.1914-16. It was withdrawn in July 1926. It is on the Clacton to Colchester service, location not known but probably in Colchester. The top deck panels read "Buses, Charas-A-Banc &c [etc] for hire" with the Jackson Road, Clacton address. Courtesy **Alan Cross, G Robbins collection**





Above: VX 6216 was a Leyland TS2 with Strachan & Brown body new in 1928 to Silver Queen, passing to Eastern National in July 1931 as 3160. EN had it rebodied in May 1935 by Eastern Counties with the new coach body seen here in a company print from the **EBEG collection**. The roof board advertises EN's London-Colchester-Clacton-Jaywick Sands express service.

Below: VX 5121 was new to Silver Queen in April 1930, being a Leyland Titan TD1 with Leyland body, becoming Eastern National's 3167 in July 1931. It was subsequently rebuilt or rebodied by Beadle in 1941 and it is likely that this photo, at an unknown location, was taken after then. It was withdrawn in 1949. **Omnibus Society**



There was also a booking office for tours and excursions in Pier Avenue, often with coaches lined up in front. An enquiry office and small depot was built at Walton-on-the-Naze on the site of the Silver Queen Kino Road bus stand, replacing an earlier Silver Queen depot in Walton. This operated as a sub-depot of Clacton. [A major feature on this depot was in EBM Extra 2, Autumn 2022. This issue also contained an article '(Clacton) Memories of a Bus Lover'. EBM Extra 3, Spring 2023, included an article on 'Working at Walton' in the 1970s and 1980s.]

There was a steady growth of bus and coach services during the 1930s. The outbreak of World War Two in September 1939 led to reductions in both bus and coach services. Large parts of the Essex coast were out of bounds or were restricted areas. Several of Eastern National's premises suffered bomb damage. For example, on 19 August 1940, Castle Road depot was hit by incendiary bombs, part of the roof was destroyed, and eight buses were damaged. Following the end of the war in Europe in May 1945 bus services were restored. In 1946 express coach services restarted.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, every summer, from the end of May to the end of September, Clacton depot had an increase in allocation to cope with the summer services, on local bus services, express coach services, plus tours and excursions. In 1963 these very unusually included three Bristol Ks hired from Southern Vectis, EDL17/8/20, given Eastern National numbers 1090-2 (EN also bought six elderly Ks from Wilts & Dorset at the same time, EN 1051-6). **Below** is EDL 18, with EN number 1091 shown by a transfer on the front dash, in the bus station on the 121 to Highfield Camp. It looks like EN made special blinds to fit the Southern Vectis screens, which were not to the Tiling standard layout. The photographer, **Paul Bateson**, noted the date as 19 June 1963, although the PSV Circle recorded the hire as starting two days later.



In 'Eastern National Memories of a Bus Company' published by the Omnibus Society in 2020, the late Reverend Terry Challis wrote about his experiences as a seasonal conductor at Clacton in 1965 and a seasonal driver at Clacton in 1968. For example, in the summer of 1965, there were six buses per hour between Clacton and Jaywick Sands. The main types of bus on the Clacton allocation were Bristol K5G or KSW5G with ECW lowbridge buses, Bristol LD5G and FLF Lodekkas, Bristol LS5G / ECW and MW5G / ECW single-deckers. Plus Leyland Titan PD1 open-toppers on sea front service 112 Holland-on-Sea - Clacton - Jaywick Sands.

The ENEG News Sheet Number 61 has this combined allocation for Clacton, Walton and Harwich for February 1969: 330 Bristol MW6G ECW C39F; 344 Bristol MW6G ECW C34F 1228/39/41/46 Bristol LS5G ECW B45F 1303/04/07/08/13/15/17/23/24/52 Bristol MW5G ECW B45F

1400/01/14/15/24 Bristol MW5G ECW DP41F
1434 Bristol MW5G ECW DP43F
2354/70 Bristol KSW5G ECW L27/28R; 2364 Bristol KSW5G ECW L27/28RD
2441/90/2519 Bristol LD5G ECW H33/27R
2701/26/28/54/72/2832/46/49/64/65/81 Bristol FLF6G ECW H38/32F
2720/57/58/2800/08 Bristol FLF6B ECW H38/32F.

Total 44 vehicles. Then during May 1969 a further 15 vehicles were allocated to Clacton for the increased summer services:

340/341/367 Bristol MW6G ECW C39F
410 Bristol RELH6G ECW C47F
504/505 Bedford SB13 Duple C41F
2378/79 Bristol KSW5G ECW O33/28R
2485/2521 Bristol LD5G ECW H33/27R; 2494/2501 Bristol LD6B ECW H33/27R
2608 Bristol FLF6B ECW CH37/22F; 2784/2792 Bristol FLF6G ECW H38/32F.

Below: 2842 (MVX 879C), a Bristol FLF6B ECW H38/32F allocated to Clacton, pauses at Rigby Avenue, Mistley, on a Saturday evening in June 1968 working the 1815 Clacton - Ipswich 123. It returned home on 2030 Ipswich - Clacton 123. By May 1970 these journeys had been converted to one man operation. Incidentally 2842 is not in the above February 1969 Clacton allocation list as it had moved to Chelmsford in December 1968 but it returned to Clacton in March 1969! I like this photo for its social history. The front upper deck seats on 2842 appear to be occupied by a family, probably returning home from a day trip to Clacton. A young man in a suit and tie is waiting to board 2842. Perhaps he is going for a night out in Ipswich. If he missed the last bus home, Eastern Counties 2230 Ipswich - Mistley 221, then he would have to travel home by taxi. **Robert Appleton**



In May 1969, Clacton received its first rear engined double-decker, which was 3003 (CPU 982G), a Bristol VRT/SL6G with ECW H39/31F body. This was followed two months later by the first rear engined single deck bus (as opposed to rear engined Bristol RELH6G coaches), this was 1505 (EPU 186G), a Bristol RELL6G with ECW B53F body (see photo on next page).



Above: 1505 at East End Corner in Brantham, Suffolk, in June 1970, working 0845 Clacton - Ipswich 123. 1505 returned home on 1045 Ipswich - Clacton 123, which was a busy journey during the summer months, with passengers heading for a day trip to Clacton.

Below: Mercedes L608D / Reeve Burgess 0209 & 0204 (C209/4 HJN) and others are seen at Clacton Bus Station on 25 May 1986. Note, they have received CN depot plates but are yet to receive fleet number plates. More info next page. Both **Robert Appleton**



However, holidays in coastal resorts around Great Britain were going into decline, replaced by cheap package holiday flights to Mediterranean resorts. Many of the sea front hotels in Clacton were converted to flats and apartments over time. Bus usage also declined due to increased private car ownership.

In advance of bus deregulation, the National Bus Company started converting urban bus networks to high frequency minibus operation, to protect networks from future competition, and to increase bus usage. On 10 May 1986 the Coastline network of minibus services were launched in Clacton and Walton using 25 Mercedes L608D / Reeve Burgess B20F (fleet numbers 0200 - 0224). Photo on previous page.

Bus deregulation occurred on 26 October 1986, but prior to this Coastal Red had started commercial bus services in competition with Eastern National in the Harwich area in September 1986. Coastal Red also gained Essex County Council contracts for evening and Sunday services, and they also started commercial bus services in the Clacton area on 26 January 1987. The bus war between Eastern National and Coastal Red lasted until 28 February 1988 when Eastern National purchased the Coastal Red operation, including their depot in Telford Road on the Gorse Lane Industrial Estate in Clacton.

Eastern National refurbished the Telford Road depot, and the Clacton allocation moved there over the weekend of 3 & 4 September 1988, with the Castle Road depot being closed. Jackson Road Bus Station closed on 27 May 1989, replaced by on street bus stops at the town end of Station Road and Jackson Road. The bus stops in Station Road were later replaced by new bus stops in Pier Avenue. The Jackson Road Bus Station site became a car park, but a driver signing on office and rest room remained for several years, possibly until closure of Clacton depot on 28 July 2018. [Initial problems after the closure of the Bus Station were reported in EBN 303, July 1989.]

To be continued.

Below: Clacton depot in Castle Road in the early 1980s, with a Leyland National and Bristol RELL / ECW inside.
Geoff Dodson / ENOC with thanks to Chris Stewart





Dual Purpose liveries of the 1980s at Clacton Bus Station. Above: Bedford YMQS / Wadham Stringer 1050 (TJN 973W) on route 114 in the early 1980s. **Chris Stewart Collection.** In December 1985 this vehicle was repainted from white & green dual purpose livery into cream & green, similar to that of sisters 1051-4/7 which had received these colours for London Regional Transport route W9 in July that year. It seemed that this would be the new DP livery, but only the next month the new chrome yellow and dark green livery was introduced, the DP version of this is seen **below** on Leyland Tiger / Alexander TE 1110 (HHJ 371Y) on 29 August 1986. **Robert Appleton**



Bus Shelters in Essex

From Travel Essex, July 2024:

"In collaboration with Clear Channel UK (CCUK), Essex County Council is launching an exciting scheme to upgrade, maintain, and expand bus shelter infrastructure across Essex. This 10-year contract aims to create a sustainable, modern, and consistent bus shelter network that enhances the experience for all bus users. Through this partnership, we will provide better facilities, aim to increase the use of public transport, and support our goal of creating a Safer, Greener, Healthier Essex.

"Essex County Council will invest £3 million in the first year of the contract to upgrade and install a range of new bus shelters across Essex that are fit for the future. This significant investment ensures that residents benefit from improved facilities, making public transport more comfortable and attractive.

"The initiative is a collaboration with ten District, Borough, and City councils, ensuring a unified approach to bus shelter management and improvement across Essex. The Councils involved in this collaboration are Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Rochford and Tendring.

"By bringing together this collaboration, we aim to create a consistent look and feel for bus shelters throughout Essex, making public transport more appealing and accessible for everyone. Whether you are looking for bus routes, bus shelters, or bus timetables in Essex, TravelEssex is committed to providing the best possible service."

Advert - New Book

The GCT Story (1957-1993) Has Finally Been Told!

From its humble beginnings as an amalgamation of two council undertakings, Grimsby-Cleethorpes Transport endured over three decades of successful operation and went on to become Stagecoach's most profitable subsidiary. This 176-page book chronologically details the highs and lows of GCT's operation, from its formation in 1957 to its sale to Stagecoach Holdings in 1993. Significant appendices detail all the bus routes, all the livery variations, repaint dates and all the vehicles. Foreword by GCT Managing Director Les Warneford (later MD of Stagecoach UK Bus).

Buy online for £25 post-free at www.GCT113.com/book.

Although this is obviously not directly related to Essex, the book does contain four photos of buses that later had Essex connections.

81 (JV 9901) AEC Regent III / Roe went to J Pitcher, Waltham for preservation in August 1966, stored in the Colchester area from August 1968 and still operational in preservation.

116 (MBE 616R) Leyland Fleetline / Roe to Stephenson (dealer), Rochford January 1994, loaned to Southend Transport then to Smith, Rayne June 1994 but gone by September 2005.

118 (QJV 118S) Leyland Fleetline / Roe appeared with Ensignbus dealer November 1997, then to Wickford Youth Band the same month, but gone by February 2006.

17 (TGX 768M) Daimler Fleetline / Park Royal, acquired from LT (DMS768) to Wright & Biddell, Rainham (Blue Triangle) September 1989, entering service August 1991. Passed to Ensignbus (dealer) September 1995 exported to Norway October 2000.

Rear Cover Photos - First Essex & Predecessors in Clacton

Top: 1319 (214 MHK), a Bristol MW5G ECW B45F new in 1959, allocated to Clacton. At Harwich Bus Station in April 1976, waiting to return to Clacton on service 106.

Bottom: 1207 (BNO 693T), a Bedford YMT Duple Dominant II DP53F, new in 1978, also allocated to Clacton. At Wash Lane Coach Park, Clacton (on the site of the original National garage) on 17 April 1982. Note that the NBC symbol on the front grille is upside down. The red part of the arrow should be at the top (as on 1050 in the photo on the previous page). Both **Robert Appleton**



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