Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 692 December 2021



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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Ensignbus Running Day 4 December 2021





Essex Bus Magazine the journal of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group
Issue 692 December 2021



Above
First Essex have applied this Christmas wrap to two vehicles, StreetLite 47655 at Basildon and Enviro 300 67741 at Colchester. The former is seen at Basildon Depot on 30 November 2021. **Jack Benee**. See also pages 16-17.

Front Cover
Vectare's Enviro 200 MMC YX16 OBO in a festive Epping High Street on 23 November 2021. **Steven Quy**

Inside Front Cover: Ensignbus Running Day 4 December 2021
The ever-popular Ensignbus Heritage Running Day returned on the first Saturday in December after last year's Covid-enforced absence. **Top**: Leyland National THX 174S on route X21, Upminster to Brentwood, in Station Approach, Upminster. Now owned by Roger Wright's London Bus Company, it was operated by Roger's earlier business, Blue Triangle, before that company was sold to Go-Ahead London. It had been new to London Transport in 1978 as LS174. It was at Loughton between 1983 and 1986 so would have worked on Essex routes. It was purchased by Blue Triangle in 1990 and out of use by 1996. In Blue Triangle days it also operated various Essex routes, including the 265 and 500. It was restored for an intended 30th anniversary of BT event which didn't happen due to the pandemic. RT1431 is behind on route X55. **Chris Stewart**. Another Leyland National features on the inside rear cover.
Bottom: BDJ 807 is an AEC Regent / Park Royal to full London specification with the addition of platform doors, but bought new by St Helens Corporation in Lancashire, one of 40, delivered in 1950 (59-73) and 1952 (1-25). Carrying a fictitious 'RT4826' bonnet number, it is in Station Road, Upminster, about to commence its first journey of the day, carrying a near capacity load on its 79-minute run to Gravesend, with Ross Newman driving. **Richard Delahoy**. An ex London Transport RT is on the rear cover.

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Subscriptions

A calendar year subscription is £25. 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 £2.20 per month. For example, a member joining in March would pay 10 x £2.20, i.e., £22. Please contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road, Southend-on-Sea SS1 3TT
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Membership Records & Data Protection

A statement of our compliance with the GDPR is available on our website or by post. For any membership or Data Protection issues please contact Richard Delahoy, address above.

Reports, Articles & Photographs

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

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Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	**7 January**
Dispatch by Printers	on or before **17 January**

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 8th 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 members of its Committee. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy, but the Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors published.

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Group Notices

Membership Renewals

Thanks again to all those who have renewed already for 2022. As we went to press, 52 members still hadn't paid and for those people, this will be your last issue of Essex Bus Magazine. I do hope you will want to continue to receive EBM and that you will renew before Christmas, please. Every year I spend a disproportionate amount of time chasing the last few subs, and if you don't pay until after the January issue goes to press, it costs us extra postage as well. I'd much rather spend the time researching and writing features for EBM and developing our archives, so I look forward to receiving your 2022 sub as soon as possible. If you've lost the renewal slip or need confirmation of how to pay, please just e-mail me for details (address on page 2) or send us a cheque for £25.

Richard Delahoy, Membership Secretary

The Running Card by Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Saturday 11 December: Route 159 Anniversary Run.
Saturday 1 January: East Anglian Transport Museum Open Day.
Monday 3 January: King Alfred Mini Running Day at Winchester.
Saturday 12 February: Enfield Transport Bazaar, St Stephens Church Hall, Village Road EN11 2EY.
Sunday 20 February: From LT to LRT display and running day at Epping-Ongar Railway, North Weald.
Saturday 2 April: South East Bus Festival, Kent Showground, Detling, Kent
Sunday 10 April: Spring Gathering, Brooklands, Surrey

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

Arriva Harlow

Further to EBM 687, Peter Mansbridge, who for a while has lived outside of Essex, has now decided to step down as Arriva Harlow correspondent. John Card has kindly agreed to report on Harlow news. However, if anyone else has any news on Harlow, always most welcome, could they please send it direct to the editor, details on page 2. We again offer our thanks to Peter for all his contributions over the years.

Bus Books

The Group has one copy each of the following titles, available free to members (just pay the postage or collect from Southend). Contact Richard Delahoy if interested:

Hardback: Blue Triangle (AEC buses), Alan Townsin; Trams of the Past, J Joyce; Buses in Camera South East, John Parke; Bus Profile - Routemaster, Alan Townsin; the years before National 1948-1968, Ray Stenning; Essex Buses In Camera, Philip C Miles.

Softback: Londoners in Exile - The DMS Worldwide, G R Mills/J Burnett; various fleet books - London Bus Handbook, 1985; Major Bus Operators South East England, 1982; First Bus Handbook, 2004; South West Bus Handbook, 2005.

Season's Greetings

The Committee and Editorial Team wish all members Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. For our Christmas issue, a slightly more mixed selection of photos than usual, with more non-Essex buses featured, but all with some link to Essex (or at least relevant to the article they appear in). In particular, a very different main historical article this month, but something we hope readers will find interesting and enjoy. The below advert is taken from the May 1967 Eastern National timetable book and gives a bit of a clue about the article.

Q. What have these places in common ?

a. LLANFAIRPWLLGWYNGYLLGOGERYCHWYRNDROBWLLLLANTYSILIOGOGOGOCH
b. PERROS GUIREC
c. ISLES OF SCILLY
d. CHENON CEAUX
e. GIANTS CAUSEWAY
f. WALL
g. ST. DAVIDS
h. POOLEWE
i. LE TOUQUET
j. LONDON ZOO
k. NORWICH

A. Time for sightseeing in each place is allowed on Eastern National tours operating direct from CHELMSFORD and other towns in Essex.

Christmas Post



Three years ago this month, in EBN 656 pages 4-7, Richard Delahoy and others told the story of Eastern National vehicles being used to deliver Christmas mail by the General Post Office in the 1960s, illustrated with some rare photos. Bristol KSW open-topper was also illustrated in EBNs 645 & 668 on this work (although with an incorrect caption which was corrected on page 25 of EBM 688).

Going through his oldest black & white negatives / scanned images, **Robert Appleton** found the above photo of C & R Coaches, Little Tey, Bedford OB / Duple Vista, C29F, JFJ 939, new to Greenslades, Exeter in 1949, on the same work. It is in Magdalen Street, Colchester, in December 1967. C & R Coaches was acquired by Hedingham & District in January 1982. In the 'Hedingham & District Omnibuses' book by Geoff Mills (M.W. Transport Publications), the C & R Coaches livery is described as light blue and cream.
A traffic poster for Christmas services in Southend the previous year is on page 8.

Day Trips to Essex - How it Was

Bob Palmer has provided a correction and a clarification to his article in last month's EBM. In the last sentence of the first paragraph on page 29 it should read "…. services ran from Hounslow round to Barnet…" not Harlow. In the third paragraph it should be made clear that the District Line electric locos, which ran in pairs on trains, were changed for a steam loco at Barking and vice versa upon return.
Allan White has also advised that the Valliant-Cronshaw of Ealing coach parked alongside NMU 7, in one of the many coach parks on Epsom Downs for the Derby in June 1968, in **Alan Osborne**'s photo on page 31, is AMX 8A.

Bus Service Improvement Plans

by Richard Delahoy



In our August issue I explained how the Government's national bus strategy ("Bus Back Better") required all English Local Transport Authorities (counties and unitaries) to submit their initial "Bus Service Improvement Plans" by 31 October, forming the basis of their bid for Government funds. You'll recall that the headline figure touted by the Government to support a transformation of bus services across England was £3bn, but of that, about £1bn has since been earmarked for city regions, and it's pretty obvious that the sum total of all the other bids will dramatically exceed the remaining £2bn of funding. Indeed, our three authorities have bid for around a quarter of that sum. Inevitably this means that bids will either be scaled back or perhaps rejected entirely.

The industry trade body CPT-UK has estimated that the total required to meet the plans is around £7bn, and have said "As a result, without further funding from government the ambitions of most BSIPs will go unfulfilled with the available funding only sufficient to transform a small number of places outside of major cities". One respected commentator has even put the cost of implementing "Bus Back Better" in full at £13bn! Way beyond the likely appetite of this government.

We don't have space to detail the key parts of each bid but a few highlights are identified below. The plans can be found on each Council's website. And to recap, each of our authorities has opted to pursue an "Enhanced Partnership" with local bus operators rather than the "nuclear" option of franchising. The current position locally is:

Essex County Council: the plan runs to 163 pages and the total bid appears to be for about £467m, within which there are five major projects - "Basildon Volt" (£60m for bus priority, increased frequencies & a longer operating day, reduced & simplified fares, zero emission buses, etc.), "Clacton Connect" (£10m to £20m, mostly on infrastructure such as a bus hub), "Harlow Falcon" (£300m, mainly for three new bus rapid transit routes), "Reach" (£81m to digitise the management of demand responsive services and expanding Digital Demand Responsive Transport across all Essex's transport 'deserts') and "Thrive" (£15m to "rejuvenate our struggling market town services").

Southend Borough Council: the 62-page bid is for £42.5m over three years (£68.6m over five years) covering a variety of projects including establishing tendered services to fill gaps in the network (Southend ceased supporting bus services way back in 2005), developing "mobility hubs" and improving frequencies / hours of operation. A trial of a flat £1.50 fare at summer weekends in 2023 is proposed at a cost of £1.6m.

Thurrock Council: Thurrock's 76-page plan doesn't actually have a total figure in it, but they've advised that the request is for £15.4m over three years (and a further £3.8m subsequently). A series of selective service enhancements are identified, costing around £3.5m a year. One novel aspect is for £200k pa to trial an evening / Sunday demand responsive transport service for three rural areas with no current service at those times (East Tilbury, Horndon on the Hill and Fobbing) - the bid admits this would likely cost an average subsidy of £20 per passenger journey!

Bus priority is seen by Government as an important factor in improving bus services, yet these plans seem to have no concrete schemes proposed (beyond the Harlow Falcon) which is a big disappointment. Indeed, the Southend and Thurrock plans in particular seem to lack any great ambition and in my opinion, lack the "wow" factor that might persuade Government to stump up the funding. Southend for example is targeting a hugely ambitious 25% reduction in journey times on the 4 key corridors, but apart from traffic light optimisation, I can't see how they plan to achieve that, beyond some feasibility studies that might lead to improvements. To put it in context, Southend Travel Centre to Hadleigh Church for example currently takes around 32 minutes off peak, rising to up to 43 minutes in the peak. A 25% reduction would mean shaving 8 to 11 minutes off that: how?



We - and the authorities and bus operators across Essex - await decisions from the Department for Transport. Will our local plans win the funding they need - and if they do, will the improvements they plan prove to be commercially self-supporting after the funding runs out in three or five years' time? Watch this space!

<< Will the BSIPs lead to more bus priority like this "bus gate" in central Chelmsford? We must hope so if bus services are to be speeded up and become more reliable.

Follow Ups to Previous Issues

Full Circle

Following Robert Appleton's article about the 103 & 104 from April 1972 to the present in EBM 690, Ted Miles provided some information from an earlier era in EBM 691. We asked then "Does anyone know when the 103 route number in use in 1955 was discontinued and what replaced it?"

The answer is actually within our own archives. In 'News Sheet Supplement Number 1, April 1965', issued with 'News Sheet Number 16', it states "Due to falling traffic, extensive service alterations were introduced on 11th April, 1965. Many poorly patronised journeys have been withdrawn but at the same time several new facilities for the travelling public were introduced." Ted had mentioned that the 103 was lightly used as it was such a slow service, and indeed that was one of the services withdrawn: "103 Withdrawn. Certain journeys transferred to service 128".

Incidentally, in the same supplement it is reported that routes 51 and 310 were both "Withdrawn, included in new service 70". The entry for 70/A/B reads: "New service from Bishop's Stortford to Harwich via Braintree and Colchester linking services 310, 70 and 51". At some stage between 1965 and 1972 the 70/A/B was split into two sections, Bishop's Stortford-Colchester and Colchester-Harwich and the latter section was renumbered on 30 April 1972 , re-using the 103 number. Which takes us full circle back to the start of Robert's original article in EBM 690!

Ted also mentioned route 107, Clacton to Walton, in his correspondence. Some journeys on this route in the 3 July 1955 timetable served Kirby-le-Soken, Halstead Villas, others bypassed there. Also, all journeys served Walton Omnibus Station, some were extended beyond there to Walton, The Naze. However, all the variations had the same route number. Later, route numbers 108 and 109 were introduced to differentiate alternative routings, the 107 was retained for the more direct route, the 108 was used for journeys that served both served Kirby-le-Soken, Halstead Villas and Walton Ashes Corner and the 109 for journeys that did not serve the former but did the latter. The route was also back projected from Clacton Bus Station to Jaywick and served Butlins Holiday Camp.



Last month, in the 'FA Vase Finals Late 1970s' article we illustrated Eastern National FLF 2859 (RHK 344D) in 1979. Here is next in sequence, 2860 (RHK 345D), just over a year later on route 109 on 21 June 1980, looking pristine after repaint earlier that month, in Clacton Bus Station. **Robert Appleton**. FLFs were low enough to go under Kirby Cross railway bridge between Kirby Cross and Great Holland. Unlike 2859, 2860 has a relatively unusual opening vent on the later style, larger bulkhead window. Despite its repaint, 2860 was withdrawn for disposal only three months later!

Back to route 128. It was withdrawn only a year later, in May 1966, with part of the route then included in the 123. This was the same month that 2860 was new! Thanks to Richard Delahoy & Chris Stewart.

Routes 87 & 542/A by Andrew Colebourne



On 13 November 2021, I saw in a bus shelter in Roding Road and still in very good condition this poster for EOS Buses route 87 "extended to Loughton & Debden from 2nd April '18". I don't go that way very often but I hadn't noticed it previously. EOS operation of the route only lasted four months. As related by Owen Woodliffe on page 15 of EBN 682, EOS Buses ceased operating the complete route 87 after 31 July 2018 but had to operate the Harlow - Epping section and one bus working as 542/A Loughton - Debden on 1 and 2 August 2018. Subsequently, the company was voluntarily wound up on 13 May 2019 and was finally dissolved on 14 February 2021.

The complete route 87 was continued by Arriva Herts and Essex from 3 August 2018. However, it was withdrawn after operation on Wednesday 30 December 2020, although the section between Harlow and Debden was continued as a DRT service by Epping Forest Community Transport. That arrangement continues following a further year's funding being obtained in March 2021. Meanwhile, the 542/A in Loughton was reinstated from 2 January 2021 under contract to Central Connect, which leads on to the second picture.

I captured LJ57 USU passing under the Central Line bridge in Roding Lane, also on 13 November. This bus is an Alexander Dennis Enviro 200, B26F, new to Arriva London North as EN3. It was withdrawn by them in July 2017 but stored and not sold to Ensignbus as dealers until March 2021 (EBN 684 page 22). As noted in EBM 688 pages 18 & 21, it passed to Central Connect in July 2021, initially running with roller blinds turned to white blank. It now has a digital display but is still in as-acquired Arriva London colours.



This bridge is the one that restricts certain Loughton area route to single-deckers. Currently the routes are the Sunday 66A and Mondays to Saturdays 542/A by Central Connect and the TfL 167 operated by Stagecoach London. The 167 was rerouted this way in September 1982 to replace the 255 which was withdrawn (itself having replaced the better known 254); prior to that the 167 went down the High Road between Buckhurst Hill and Loughton so could use double-deckers.

Buses, Beer & Football



Further to Allan White's letter about Eastern National open-top KSW WNO 479 being used for a victory parade in 1971 for Hoddesdon Town FC in EBM 690 and the follow up piece on the FA Vase last month, here is another photo of an EN open-top KSW being used in another victory parade the same year. The photo also links with the two photos of beer adverts last month, the Bass advert in 'From the Colour Archives' and the generic beer advert on page 31. Incidentally, the double-deck bus on page 31 of EBM 691, 1251 (ENO 933), was a Bristol GO5G, not a Bristol K. It was new to ENOC in 1937 with an ECW body and was given a new body by ECW and a PV2 radiator in 1949. Thus it was made to look very much like a post-war K type. Thanks to Terry Challis for this information and to Chris Stewart who also pointed out the editor's error.

1971 was by far the best year in Colchester United's history. As a fourth division side they beat the, at the time mighty, Leeds United 3-2 in the FA Cup, which still ranks as one of the greatest giant killings of all time. Then, in the summer, they won the Watney Cup.

The Watney Mann Invitation Cup (normally referred to as simply the Watney Cup) was a short-lived pre-season tournament held four times between 1970 and 1973. It was contested by the teams that had scored the most goals in each of the four divisions of the Football League the previous season who had not been promoted or admitted to one of the European competitions. Two teams from each division took part, making eight participants in total. The competition was a straight knockout format, each match was a one-off with no replays. The final took place at the home ground of one of the finalists, rather than a neutral venue. The competition was so named thanks to a sponsorship deal with the Watney Mann brewery, it was the first tournament where English Football League clubs sold naming rights. Incidentally, the first ever penalty shootout in England took place in a semi-final of the 1970 tournament between Hull City and Manchester United, and was won by Manchester United. The first footballer to take a penalty was George Best, and the first to miss one was Denis Law. The next year, fourth division Colchester United got to the final where they drew 4-4 away to First Division West Bromwich Albion, before winning 4-3 on penalties. The photo shows the team aboard an unidentified Eastern National open-top KSW on their victory parade through Colchester. **Alf Jefferies** with thanks to Lynn Ballard. With thanks to Wikipedia.

SOUTHEND & DISTRICT JOINT SERVICES

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1966

CHRISTMAS EVE

Normal Saturday Service with these extra late journeys:

Ser. 7: 0.28 Southend (Central Station)—Golden Cross

Ser. 25: 0.20 Southend (Central Station)—Leigh Church

Ser. 29: 23.51 Southend (Pier Hill)—Eastwood (Belgrave Road)

CHRISTMAS DAY
No Services
(except Ser. 7: 6.38 Southend (Central Station)—Ashingdon and 7.4 Ashingdon—Southend (Central Station) will run.)

BOXING DAY
Sunday Service
(except Ser. 151 & 251: for special timetable see leaflet)

TUESDAY, 27th DECEMBER
Sunday Service

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Normal Saturday Service with these extra late journeys:

Ser. 3: 0.20, 0.40, 1.10, 1.40 Southend (Victoria Circus)—Shoeburyness (Cambridge Hotel)

Ser. 7: 0.20, 0.40, 1.10, 1.40 Southend (Central Station)—Golden Cross

Ser.25: 0.20, 0.40, 1.10, 1.40 Southend (Central Station)—Leigh Church

Service Revisions

by Paul Harvey

1 November 2021
5/6 Bishop Stortford to Stansted Airport / Stansted Airport to Saffron Walden (M-S) **Stephensons** reduced timetable introduced.
6A Belfairs Woodcutters to Leigh Station (M-F) **Stephensons** morning peak service suspended until further notice.
38/A Witham to Halstead (M-S) **Stephensons** revised timetable with reduction in service operating only hourly between Bocking & Halstead.
59/60/590 Saffron Walden to Audley End Station (M-S) **Stephensons** reduced timetable introduced.
301 Bishop Stortford to Saffron Walden (M-S) **Stephensons** reduced timetable introduced.

8 November
BM0004/JA - TC High Ongar/North Weald Bassett/North Weald to Epping St John's School (Sch) **Acme Bus Co** new schooldays services.

14 November
Ensignbus introduced further timetable changes affecting services 73A, Z1, Z2 & Z4 for Amazon requirements.

15 November
Ensignbus introduced further timetable changes affecting services 22, 44, 73 & 77A for Amazon requirements.

First Essex introduced fixed journey cancellations on the following services: 5 (Pitsea to Langdon Hills), 8/A (Laindon to Pitsea), 25 (Basildon to Southend), 40 (Channels to Boreham), 45 (Moulsham Lodge to Oxney Green), 54/A (Beaulieu Park to Broomfield Hospital), 56 (North Melbourne to Beaulieu Park), 57 (Beaulieu Park to Galleywood), 100S (Lakeside to Basildon) & 100N (Basildon to Chelmsford) Mondays to Saturdays and service 9 (Basildon to Brentwood) on Saturdays until further notice due to driver shortages. Note: suffixes for route 100 are not publicly displayed, timetables and destination displays just show '100'.

Go Ahead Hedingham introduced reduced emergency timetables on services 63, 88 & 89 due to driver shortages.

Vectare reinstated normal timetables for services 61/C & 62.

19 November
Go Ahead Hedingham introduced further emergency timetable reductions to services 4, 6. 63, 74, 76/X76, 88, 89, 97/98 & 136/137 on Mondays to Saturdays plus services 3 & 135 on Saturdays until further notice due to driver shortages.

1 December
F315 Sudbury to Halstead (M-S) **Essex & Suffolk Dart CIC** withdrawn but operation transferred to **Arrow Taxis**. Will remain as a flexible service. No change to Dart3 North East Braintree operation.

4 December
Ensignbus Heritage Running Day services X55 & X81 revised timetables.

6 December
Ensignbus have officially cancelled the following services 22X, 24, 25, 29, 66A, 88A and FS (Damyns Hall Aerodrome shuttle service), these services were cancelled during lockdown but never officially withdrawn with the Traffic Commissioners Office.

26 December
X10 Southend to Lakeside **Ensignbus** reintroduction of this special Boxing Day service operating hourly throughout the day.
Stephensons school services 514, 594 & 814 cancelled, these services were cancelled during lockdown but never officially withdrawn with the Traffic Commissioners Office.

3 January 2022
14 Harlow to Little Parndon Pinnacles (M-S) **Central Connect** revised timetable.

4 January
19/C Chipping Ongar to Epping St Margaret's Hospital/Epping Station (M-S) **Vectare** revised route and timetable.
20 Harlow to Brays Grove (M-F) **Vectare** new service one positioning journey each direction.
30 Coopersale to Epping St Margaret's Hospital (M-S) **Vectare** new service
381 Coopersale to Harlow (M-S) **Vectare** revised timetable service renumbered 31.

From **30 November**, following the discovery of the new Omicron variant of Coronavirus, face coverings once again became compulsory (unless exempt) on Public Transport.

692 for EBM 692

Right: BNO **692**T was a Bedford YMT with Duple Dominant II DP53F body, new to Eastern National in July 1978 with fleet number 1206. One of 18 ordered by National Travel (South East) but diverted to Eastern National as 1200-17 when the NT(SE) coaching operations were reorganised. It was delicensed from Halstead depot in June 1983, repainted at Central Works, then stored at Prittlewell pending return to the leasing company in August 1983. It is seen at Mansfield Bus Station on 19 November 1988 when owned by Rainworth Travel of Langwith, Nottinghamshire. A photo of this vehicle when with Eastern National appeared in EBN 681.



Below: 1200-17 were replaced with the same number of Leyland Tiger TRC/TL11/2Rs with Alexander TE DP53F bodies, 1100-27. 1123 (A**692** OHJ) was new in November 1983, its first allocation was to Braintree depot a month later. On 21 July 1990 DT1123 was outside Harwich depot on Station Approach. Destination blind and route number set for Works Contract 2, from Harwich to the British Xylonite Plastics factory at Brantham, just over the border in Suffolk. This works contract operated three times per day, seven days per week, for the shift changeovers at 0600, 1400 and 2200.
Both **Robert Appleton**







Above left: Bordacoach, Abridge, Essex 77 (XVY **692**J) at Southend Seaway Coach Park in September 1986. A 1972 Daimler Fleetline / Roe, H78F, ex York Pullman.

Above right: Eastern National Citybus Leyland National 1780 (PEV **692**R) at Loughton Station on 7 August 1988. This was the first day of Citybus taking over the route from London Transport and it was chaos, including, as can been seen, 1780 getting a nearside front puncture. Both **Robert Downton**

New Album

'All In', the second studio album by 'Apollo Junction', was released on 12 November 2021. It features a vehicle familiar to Essex on the front cover and on the limited edition vinyl picture disc, preserved former Eastern National Bristol MW6G / ECW coach 573 UVX, new as 536 in June 1961 and renumbered 350 in August 1964. However, in these photos it is carrying the rather incongruous registration SYO 724F and the destination displays show 'Northern' and 'National', although the fleet name is 'Eastern National'. Previously owned by Talisman Coach Lines, 350 is now owned by Bristol Film & Television.



With thanks to Chris Stewart, Don McKeown and Bill Barlow.

Below: 350, when owned by Talisman, at the Clacton Bus Rally on 31 May 2015.
Adam Kelleher





From the Colour Archives

by Richard Delahoy



November and December 1967 saw a bitter five and a half week strike by Southend Corporation bus crews. We told the story a while ago* but more recently I've acquired a few colour slides taken by a railway enthusiast friend, **John Coppins**, who sadly died a few years ago. John normally took railway subjects but caught a few shots of the amazing variety of independent operators hired in by SCT to provide a service on the key routes. This shot is one of the most unusual, capturing an early Leyland Atlantean, a type never that common in south Essex. TMW 853 was the very first Atlantean to be delivered to an independent bus operator, being new to Silver Star of Porton Down in June 1959. Along with three sisters, it passed to Wilts & Dorset in 1963 when Silver Star sold out, but very quickly three of the four moved on to Bristol Omnibus, then to Super Coaches of Upminster in 1964 (joining the fourth one that had passed directly to Super). TMW then passed on to Midas Motor Services of Brentwood in 1966 and was used on school contracts.

Midas were one of over 20 operators who provided buses and crews to cover SCT routes and contracts during the strike and here it is seen in the yard on the north side of Southend Central station, ready for a trip to Ashingdon on service 7. Note the yellow destination board, known to staff for years afterwards as "strike boards". TMW was later exported to the USA, but sister 1013 MW is superbly preserved in Silver Star condition and appears at rallies and running days, especially the annual Winchester FoKAB events.



A further **John Coppins** shot shows the newest bus used during the strike, an almost brand new Ford R192/Strachans, GNM 470F, seen here rounding the Porters Grange roundabout at pace on service 16 or 17 to Temple Sutton. It had been new in August 1967 and later operated for Osbornes of Tollesbury.

* Our main feature article on the strike was in issue 528, April 2008 (incidentally the first ever to feature a colour cover, a Super Coaches ex Western Welsh Leyland Tiger Cub). Subsequently Paul Bateson wrote about his experiences of the time in issue 643 (November 2017) with follow up in 644 and photos by Brian Ashley in 645. PDF copies of all are available on request.

Paul Bateson also has 27 colour photos of the stike on his Flickr site, see pages 3 and 4 of his 1967 album at https://flic.kr/s/aHsk2fcqX4.

Three more atmospheric **John Coppins** shots from the SCT strike of 1967, all nicely capturing street scenes so evocative of the time.



Left: GTY 170 was a Leyland PD2/MCW new to Tyneside (part of the Northern General group) but here operated by Wells of Hatfield Peverel, seen on Southchurch Road possibly on service 6 to Newington Avenue, in the company of two of Fords finest of the time - a Mk 1 Cortina, followed by a Zephyr Mk III. It's thought that Wells only provided double deckers on Saturdays. Shoppers searching for a Binns in Southend will have been sorely disappointed!

Below: VBU 50 of Andrew Stock of Rayleigh (who traded as Rayleigh Grey) was working as a sub-hire from Thorns Coaches. A Ford 570E with Plaxton coachwork, this vehicle had previously not been identified as one of the strike busting vehicles until I saw John's slide. It appears to be on the 4B to Little Wakering and is in Southchurch Road with a Corporation highbridge PD3 behind on the 6 - a few SCT buses still ran, manned by office staff and crews who opposed the strike.



Bottom: another great street scene, in Southend High Street by the exit from Central Station north side yard, finds LLU 857, the former London Transport RTL867, now with Super Coaches/Upminster & District, running on the 17, Temple Sutton to Eastwood. Super had taken over complete operation of the 16/17. The rear of the Midas Atlantean can be seen heading up the High Street.



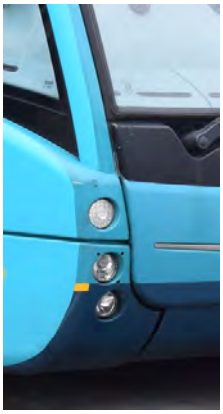
Southend

Transferred in:

1564, HX04 HUH, Dennis Dart, Caetano B29F, from Colchester, entered service on 11 November. It is seen below on 12th, at Temple Sutton, Cokefield Avenue (McDonalds), the terminus of route 6. **Richard Delahoy**



4468, MX61 AXJ, VDL DB300 / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 H43/27F, in the new lighter blue Arriva livery (but without white & blue relief or any fleet names). Received from Maidstone where it had been in long term store for almost a year. It is understood to be an extra vehicle to cover during the planned repaint programme. It was new to Arriva Merseyside and has the lower height 'squashed' body style. It entered service on 15 November and is seen, on the opposite page, that evening on route 1 at London Road Leigh. **John G Lidstone** with thanks to Matthew Evans.



Meanwhile, on 16 November, 6515 was sent off for repaint, with the rest of the Enviro 400s to follow (we are not sure yet if SCT liveried 6499 and poppy bus 6458 are included in the repaint programme).

With the closure of Arriva's garage in Guildford in mid-December, it has been suggested that a number of Versas may transfer to Southend to eliminate most of the remaining DAF, VDL and Volvo single deckers (except for heritage-liveried 3816). Some of those transferred in may be ones that were new to Southend in 2011 for service 9 and which moved to Guildford when Southend received its Enviro 400 double-deckers. Similarly, Colchester are expecting nine Enviro 200s to replace their remaining Darts. We hope to have more details next month.

Further buses to receive the 'We're heading to the Beach' service 9 graphics are 4186 (as reported last month) and 4240. These are slightly curious as they were in the older darker blue Arriva livery and at a first glance, appear to have been repainted into the new livery, but on closer examination, vinyl in the new lighter blue has simply been applied over the existing paintwork to add the branding and this has extended to other areas, e.g. above the windows. However, traces of the old livery remain, e.g. on the front lower panels, windscreen pillars, etc and these buses have not been repainted! A close up of the vinyls in the new livery applied to vehicles in the old livery on 4240 is illustrated right.



Colchester
There is no further news yet re the replacement Park & Ride buses, it is thought they may not now arrive until January.
As reported above, stored short Dart 1564 was moved to Southend on 9 November for service, and Colchester are expecting nine Enviro 200s from Guildford to replace their remaining Darts.

Harlow
Solo 1460 (KE54 OSV) transferred from Harlow to Ware in October.
The Harlow Bus Station Enquiry Office remains closed but the manager has said that it is the intention to reopen it at some point.

With thanks to Matthew Evans, Keith Sadler, John Lidstone, John Card, Adam Kelleher.



Right: 4101 at Hertford Bus Station on 10 November 2021, the day before Armistice Day, with this alternating display.
Allan White

Acquired Vehicles

33412	WA56 FUD	SFD45MBRA6GX34108	6411/1	H39/32F	01/07	First Devon & Cornwall
33414	WA56 FTK	SFD45MBRA6GX34110	6411/3	H39/32F	01/07	First Devon & Cornwall
33415	WA56 FTN	SFD45MBRA6GX34111	6411/4	H39/32F	01/07	First Devon & Cornwall

Alexander Dennis Trident / Enviro 400. Acquired from First West of England in orange 'Excel' livery. 33412/5 were seen at Basildon Depot on 12 November 2021. 33414 reported at Basildon on 22 November. 33412 has gone to Mardens for repaint.

Correction to EBN 680. The seating capacity of Volvo B7TL / Transbus ALX400s 32249 & 32260, acquired from First West of England in October 2020, is H45/2**0**F, not H45/2**1**F. The seating layout downstairs is three double seats each side (including back to back over rear wheel arches), five at rear and three singles nearside front. There are no tip up seats in the wheelchair area on the offside, behind the straight staircase.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 8 2021/22 (24 October - 20 November)

30564 CR-CR (oos), 31785 CR-CR (oos), 32530 BN (oos)-CR, 33412 FG-BN (oos), 33415 FG-BN (oos),
41521 CR (shuttles)-Disposal, 42898 CR (oos)-Disposal, 42922 CF (oos)-Disposal, 42931 CF (oos)-Disposal, 42932 CF-Disposal, 42968 CF-Disposal, 63334 CR (oos)-CR, 66730 CR-CF (oos), 66826 CF (oos)-Disposal, 67161 BN-CF, 67163 BN-CF, 67194 CF-HH, 67736 CR-CR (oos), 69433 CF-CF (oos)

Disposals

41521, the last Caetano bodied Dart in the fleet, has been sold (September 2021) to the owner of preserved sister 41522, either for spares for 41522 or possible restoration. However, it is still currently at Quayside Depot, Colchester waiting to be collected. It survived much longer than its sisters as it was used as a Publicity bus pre-pandemic and as a driver shuttle at Colchester during lockdown, when it was useful for social distancing.
66826 towed from Chelmsford depot to Wigley, Barnsley, 15 November 2021.
42898 and 42922 to Ensignbus, November 2021.
42931, 42932 and 42968 also disposed of during November 2021.

Christmas Wrapping

StreetLite 47655 at Basildon and Enviro 300 67741 at Colchester have received overall dark blue based Christmas wraps (late November). They are seen opposite, 67741 at Witham on route 71 on 4 December 2021 (**Dave Arnold**) and 47655 at Basildon Depot 30 November 2021 (**Jack Benee**). See also page 1.

Below: CF32676 gets a helping hand at Broomfield Hospital on 15 November 2021. It had been on route 70. **Gareth Jones**




Colchester
Via Witham
71
Merry Christmas
SN62 AKJ


We're recruiting PCV drivers
Not in service
Merry Christmas
SN15 AEV

Area News & Workings

Colchester

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

32673 was held back from re-entering service after repaint into Remembrance Day livery until after being used for Remembrance Day events. It was used on 12 November to provide transport for VIP guests from the Royal British Legion and armed forces representatives on a tour that visited historic Colchester landmarks, in the company of a First World War soldier re-enactor dressed in authentic uniform with rifle. It then visited the Colchester Remembrance Parade on Sunday 14th. First Essex Marketing Manager Sheena Karim commented: "This is such an important time for many people to remember family, friends and others who have been lost in military service. We have a number of ex-service personnel within First, and Colchester is a town steeped in military history. The Remembrance bus has been designed to recognise these links and pay tribute." A short video, featuring 32673 and Sheena, is on the First Essex website, under 'Latest News' dated 13 Nov. 32673 also has interior decals for Remembrance Day, including a large poppy on the staircase panel behind the driver's cab.

32530 has received the engine and gearbox from withdrawn 32640 and is now in service at Colchester, having been transferred from Basildon. It arrived at CR on 20 November and entered service there on route 62B on 22nd.

News of out of service vehicles as at 21 November. 63334 is back in service after engine replacement. 30564 & 32478 are now both off road with chassis corrosion and 31785 is off road with a defective engine. 66730 had returned to Westway and is being stripped for spares before disposal. Further to last month, work on repairing 32477 seems to have ceased and it is dumped in the scrap / out of service line outside. It is possible that all the remaining ex First Eastern Counties AU53 plate Volvo / ALX400s are now finished at CR, although three of them, 32482-4, remain in use at Chelmsford. Update 29th: 32087 on route 88A, its last day before MOT expiry and it is not due to be retested. Update 3 December: 32547 at Volvo Truck Ipswich. 66797 on loan from CF to CR (since 2nd).

From 31 October, for a limited time, after 7pm each day of the week, unlimited travel in the Colchester Inner Zone was reduced to £2.

News of the Harwich routes (3 - 30 November).

Double-deckers. 16 Volvo B7TLs and three Volvo B9TLs worked on routes 103/104 during this period, but the majority were on the Monday - Friday morning peak duty that finishes with 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103 (duty 1 as outlined in EBM 690, page 11). Eight double-deckers worked through to Harwich on service 104, in date order these were: 32068 (4th), 32478 & 32547 (both on 5th due to delays caused by roadworks, and traffic diverted off A120), 37042 (9th), 32628 (15th), 37010 (16th), 37036 (17th) and 37136 (19th). In a reversal of normal allocations, on 30 November 66798 worked 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103, and 37020 worked 0715 Harwich - Colchester 103, then 37020 was replaced by 67738 for the rest of the duty. Thus most of the Monday - Friday duties, all Saturday duties, and the Sunday 102 duties were all single-deck operated. All 11 of the Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipses on the CR allocation were used. 11 of the 12 Enviro 300s were used, the missing one was 67736, recorded in EBM 691 as being off the road with rear suspension problems. In addition seven StreetLites worked on 102/103/104.

Clacton routes: 74B: 32068 (17th), 32087 (20th), 32628 (13th), 32669 (30th), Remembrance Day liveried 32673 (19th), 37004 (16th), 37006 (10th, 12th), 37016 (27th), 37017 (22nd), 37027 (15th, 18th, 29th), 37034 (9th, 26th), 37035 (11th), 37042 (24th), 37053 (25th), 37135 (3 Dec), 37136 (2 Dec), 37140 (4 Dec), 66801 (23rd).

76 (in date order): 66801 (14th), 66798 (21st), 32530 (28th), 37020 (5 Dec).

Chelmsford

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CF. All dates November 2021 except where stated.)

Over the weekend of 4 (0600) - 6 (0600) December, General's Lane Roundabout at the Boreham Interchange was closed with diversions to routes 40, 71 & variants and 73, with a free shuttle bus operating from Church Road, Boreham to Hatfield Peverel Station.

Dart 42439 extremely rare on a couple of round trips on X10 on 26th, probably the first time a Dart has been used on the route. Enviro 200 MMC 44660 also very unusual on the route on 2 December.

44545 (1 Dec), 66760 (2 Dec), 66830 (15th) and 69432 (3 Dec) on X30.

On S33 plus Tuesdays only 35 have been (date order) 36838 (9th), 67196 (16th), 32631 (23rd, see photo next page), 32483 (am) & 36838 (pm) on 30th.

Black Park & Ride Enviro 200 MMCs are relatively common on school route S33, reported have been 67189 (2 Dec), 67190 (24th), 67192 (1 & 3 Dec), 67193 (17th, 19th) and 67195 (15th, 25th, 26th, 29th). Much more unusual was green 67160 on 22nd.

The P&R MMCs continue to be used on other routes, but, in contrast, green MMC 67164 was on Park & Ride on 29th.

67194 has returned to Hadleigh (where it was between June & August last year) and 67192 has been on loan to both Basildon & Hadleigh, see below.

On 17th, all Darts available for service were in use, for the first time for some time, 13 from Chelmsford and three from Hadleigh.

The four short Enviro 200 MMCs usually stick to their allocated route 57, but occasionally stray, 44661 on 32 (27th) and 44662 on 13 (30th) were two more unusual allocations. DS66863 seen on driver training in South Woodham Ferrers on 8th.

Top of opposite page: The Tuesday only First Essex 35 route introduced in September utilises the bus used for the school service to Debden Park High School. 32631 lays over in Burton Road, Debden on 23 November prior to its 0845 departure for Chelmsford Market.

Owen Woodliffe



Basildon & Hadleigh

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

Black Park & Ride Enviro 200 MMC 67194 has transferred from Chelmsford to Hadleigh, first in use on routes 28/22 on 3 November. Similar 67192 was on loan from Chelmsford to Basildon between 10 & 16 November, noted on routes 8/A, 25 & 100. It then moved on to Hadleigh, on school route 827 on 17th. It was in service there until 23rd, reported on routes 22/28 & 20/27. It was back on Park & Ride in Chelmsford on 26th.

Route 9 continues to be mainly Enviro 400 operated but normally with at least one StreetLite each day. However, on 19th, 23rd, 25th, 26th & 29th, it was all double-deck operated. Other types of double-decker noted have been 32249 (29th), 32260 (23rd), 32526 (23rd, 24th), 32531 (15th, 16th, 4 Dec), 32532 (29th), 32539 (17th, 22nd), 32540 (20th, 4 Dec), 33086 (15th) and 33186 (16th, 3 Dec). Two mini Enviro 200s, 44908 & 44910, on the route on Saturday 13th was very unusual, as was Volvo Hybrid 69915 on 15th. 44908 again on Saturday 27th.

Routes 94/A continued to be mainly operated by a StreetLite and a mini-Enviro 200 or, occasionally, two StreetLites. On 9th, 44908 was replaced by 33572 on the 0900 from Basildon to South Woodham Ferrers. On 22nd, 33555 replaced 47657 on the 1602 94A from BN to SWF. On 26th, 33504 replaced 47655 on the 1810 from BN to SWF. Other double-deckers on the routes: 33548 (29th), 33568 (25th), 33573 (27th). Two mini-Enviro 200s,44908 & 44909 was unusual on 24th, although a StreetLite also operated that day.

Double-deckers on route 100: 33086 (unusual Trident / President 20th), 33186 (another unusual Trident / President 23rd, 2 Dec), 33504 (16th), 33544 (10th, 14th), 33545 (3 Dec), 33551 (13th), 33553 (16th), 33558 (23rd), 33561 (2 Dec), 33570 (1 Dec), 33572 (12th, 18th), 33573 (17th, 24th). 33572 (14th) a double-decker on 16.

44909 on 251 (21st, 28th). 66821, an unusual long single-decker, on 251 on 28th. 44909 on 8 (26th). 44910 on 5 (20th). 67903 (16th) and 69916 (19th) on school route 625. HH69519 on 27 (18th), on 25 (22nd).

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Stephen Barham, Dale Bell, Jack Benee, Jon Collins, Robert Downton, David Edwards, Julian Elliott, Paul Paske, John Podgorski, Ian Ransom, Andrew Toms, Robert West, First Essex, Bus Lists on the Web, Bustimes, Facebook, Route One magazine, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

STEPHENSONS NIBSbuses by Richard Delahoy

Vehicles
Darts 404/4 (EU03 CFX/Y) are now in store and are unlikely to be used again.

Services
Revised timetables with fewer journeys are in force from 1 November on services 5/6, 6A, 38/A, 59/590 & 301 reflecting the current staff shortages. Some other minor tidying up of registrations takes place from 26 December.

Galloway, Mendlesham
Two Stephensons buses are now outstationed at the Galloway depot at Mendlesham and are being crewed by Galloway drivers on service 384 (Stowmarket to Bury St Edmunds) and Bury town service Breeze 1.

With thanks to the companies and Richard Bareham.

Below: A Stephensons bus working a NIBS route at a TfL bus stop: 442 (YX10 FEH), an Enviro 200, stands at Ockendon Station on route 269, an Essex CC contract worked by NIBS, Brentwood to Grays, on 27 November 2021. The destination displayed is only seen once a day, for the last journey of the day from Brentwood which terminates at South Ockendon Gatehope Drive, about a mile south west of the station.

Reflected in the windscreen is the station train departure board. Despite being outside London, TfL provide the bus stop signs here on roads where their services run, with the flag listing the 11 (a Thurrock contract worked by NIBS), 269 and TfL's 347, one of the more obscure routes in their network, running every two hours off-peak only (four journeys a day) from Romford to Ockendon via Harold Wood. There are also two tiles displayed for route 12 that was withdrawn a long while ago!
Matthew Evans

An ambition in Thurrock Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (see page 5) would see Ensignbus's route 88 extended from its current terminus at Stifford Clays on to Ockendon Station, at an estimated gross cost of £900k pa.



hedingham chambers

by Mark Lloyd

Significant Allocations

298 CN - KN	by 22 November	642 Acq - CN	by 19 November
510 KN - HD	by 8 November	874 SY - KN	by 12 November returned to SY by 15 November

Withdrawn Vehicles

568 W458 WGH & 572 W489 WGH towed away for scrap 19 November.
580 W527 WGH has been withdrawn with gearbox failure.

Fleet News

294 OU57 FGZ entered service at Hedingham on 11 November. 283, 579 and 587 wore poppy emblems for the lead up to Remembrance Day. 642 LK08 FLN Ex EN22 E400 arrived at Clacton depot on 19 November, reconfigured to single door, repainted and ready for service.

The President fleet reduces further with 565/73/9/84/6/7/8 left in closed top form. Only 565/73/9 from the original batch in Hedingham livery. 284 OU57 FGX has moved from HD depot and may be entering the next phase of repairs. 500 PL51 LDJ open topper has moved from HD to KN depot for long term winter storage. Both Optare Solos 910 & 911 are currently not in use at HD.

Service News

Service 77/A Colchester to Aingers Green has predominantly seen MCV E200s performing in particular 268 AE59 AWM. Saturday 19 November saw the introduction of further service reductions, this time from the Hedingham Depot network, essentially the 88 and the 89 routes. Four round trips have been cancelled on the 88 diagram with positioning changes too and 89 has two round trips plus many other changes, utilising the ability to change service at Halstead for the Hedingham/Yeldham corridor. Essentially drivers are being utilised to keep ECC contracts running at the expense of the previous core prestigious routes. Having monitored the 88 service in Colchester for weeks beforehand, there were significant absences from the Saturday schedule before this point in time. The 88 suffered further disruption in late November as roadworks in Colchester Road, Halstead and White Colne caused considerable delays.

With thanks to John Podgorski & Hedingham website.

Below: Black Cat Travel of Harmston Lincoln held their open and running day on 7 November 2021. Ex Hedingham L84, RGV 284N, a 1974 Leyland Leopard Willowbrook, was seen in the depot yard. **Paul Harvey**





Ensignbus

omnibus suppliers to the world

by Mark Lloyd

Dealer Stock Movements November 2021

Vehicles In
From **First Essex:** Darts WX05 RVC, EU05 AUO - fleet numbers 42898, 42922, see page 16
From **First Eastern Counties:** Darts EU05 AUL, SN05 EAJ - fleet numbers 42919, 42929, ex-First Essex
From **First West of England:** Volvo B7TLs LK53 LZH/M
From **Go Ahead London**: Volvo B7TLs W543 WGH, Y818 TGH, LX54 GZK/R
From **Go Ahead South Coast**: Volvo B7TL SN56 AWX. Darts SN03 LDU, HW54 BUU. DAFs NK04 FPA, YJ07 JTX/Y.
Solos NK54 DEU/DFC/D, MV07 DWM, MX53 FEF, GP02 DPV, VU52 UES, MX03 YBD. Volvo B12Ms MV02 UMJ/K/L/S/U/X.
Volvo B10M Y784 MFT. Scania YN04 GHD/J/V. Dennis KT51 BXH
From **Lothian Buses**: Volvo B9TLs SN09 CVB/C/D/E/F/G/H/J/K/L, SN59 BFL/M/O/P/U/V/X/Y/Z/BGE/F
From **Metroline:** Volvo B9TLs LK59 CWU/CWP/O/X/CXF/CRJ/CRV/FCO/CXH/CXN/CXO
From **N.A.T**: Scanias LX59 CRJ/CRV
From **Redbridge Travel**: Volvo B7TLs PN02 XCT/XCA

Vehicles Out
A-line, Gateshead: Volvo B7RLE SK07 CGF
Avondale, Glasgow: Dart HW54 BUU
Bus & Coach Repairs, Yaxley: Volvo B12Ms MV02 UMJ/K/X. Volvo B10M Y784 MFT. Scanias YN04 GHD/J/V. Dennis KT51 BXH.
City Direct, Galway, Eire: Enviro 400 LJ09 OKC
Diesel Tank Services, Stowmarket: RML 2346
Discover Dorset, Bournemouth: Volvo B7Ls EU05 VBJ/M
Faresaver, Chippenham: Solo YJ64 DBV
Gardbus, Eastleigh: Enviro 200 SN57 DWK
Langston & Tasker, Steeple Claydon: Volvo B9TLs SN08 BYL/R/T
National Driving Centre, Croydon: Enviro 200 GN58 BUV
Past Due Training, Tilbury: Scania YN03 WRG
Pearce Seeds: Volvo B7L EU04 CPV
Seven Sisters Bus & Coach, Lewes: Volvo B7TL LT52 WWS. Tridents LV52 HFT/Z. Volvo B7L EU05 VBT.
Trainfor Group, Faversham: Darts KP02 PWO/N
Watts Coaches: Volvo B12Ms MV02 UML/S/U
York Pullman: Volvo B9TLs SN59 BFL/M/Z
Youngs Coaches, Cambridge: Volvo B11RT BV66 WOC

To Shelton Motors for scrap
Volvo B7TLs PN02 XC/S/T, LX05 EZB, LK51 XGR. Enviro 200s LX07 BXN/H/S, SN57 DWW. Volvo B7LA T6 FCC

Ensignbus Fleet
Volvo B9TLs 117/118 to Pulham Coaches, Bourton-on-the-Water
Volvo B9TLs 121/122 to Red Rose, Aylesbury
Volvo B9TL 123 to N.A.T Cardiff
Leyland PD3 KTJ 204C to York Pullman

Due to roadworks in Rainham w/c 22 November 2021, Ensignbus was running a free shuttle on TfL route 372 using an Enviro 200 MMC on behalf of Stagecoach between Rainham Interchange and Wennington Hall Farm while the main 372 was on diversion away from that section of the route.



Right: A very popular performer on the 4 December heritage running day was MD60, a 1976 Metropolitan, seen here approaching Lakeside Bus Station en route from Tilbury Ferry to Shenfield on the X81. **Richard Delahoy**

by Ian Ransom

A couple of stunning evening / night shots. Below: Volvo B12B / Plaxton Panther DC53 PAN operating a last minute late evening cruise ship shuttle for passengers on the 'MS Maud' at Harwich International to Dovercourt and Harwich Town on 19 October 2021.
Adam Barham

Bottom: As reported last month, former Blackpool Trident / East Lancs PN04 XDK has been acquired from M&M Staffing, Chelmsford. Photos of this bus on loan to Arriva Southend for schools work appeared in EBN/M 678 & 688. In Harbour Crescent, Harwich just after its school run at sunset on 5 November 2021. Still in M&M livery but with fleet names and decals removed. **Stephen Barham**





IPSWICH BUSES IN ESSEX

by Robert Appleton

Further to EBM 691 page 23, on 13 November two of the three Mercedes Citaros, 153/5 (BF65 HVT/V), again worked the Saturday duties on Ipswich - Colchester 93 instead of the usual ADL Enviro 200. On Saturday 27th Citaro 154 (BF65 HVU) worked on 93 together with 70 (YX59 BZL), an 8.9m long Enviro 200.

On 24/25/29/30 November, Optare Solo M950 245 (YJ05 XNY) worked on Colchester routes 4 & 11 instead of an Enviro 200.

This month an update on the contract services that start in Essex. All buses & coaches used are fitted with seat-belts.

The three Scania OmniCities acquired in the summer, 49/50/51 (YN08 DHE/F/X), have been repainted into the green/purple livery. In November they were re-registered SGZ 3349/2350/3351 respectively. Together with Scania OmniCities 46/47/48 (SGZ 3346/7/8), any three of the six work Ipswich School contracts 2A from Feering/Colchester Tollgate, 2B from Colchester Braiswick/Boxted/Langham and 2C from Langenhoe/Colchester.

The two Volvo B11RT / Caetano Levante coaches 2/3 (BX65 WDA/D) have been re-registered SGZ 1002/1003 respectively. 2 regularly worked Ipswich School contract 6 from Castle Hedingham/Halstead, but on 23 November 10.8m long Enviro 200 75 (GD10 MVM) was used instead. The Volvo B7R / Jonckheere Modulo coach 1 regularly worked Ipswich School contract 10 from Holland-on-Sea/Tendring. On 15 November it was still registered SGZ 3351, but when seen again on 23rd it was re-registered SGZ 1001, the 3351 registration being re-used on 51, as noted above.

Ipswich School contract 3 from Dedham Heath/Dedham continues with an 8.9m long Enviro 200, 72 (LX58 LMM) was used on 15 & 23 November.

Contract RC1 from Thorrington Crossroads, Wivenhoe, and Colchester to Suffolk Rural College at Otley was worked by 10.8m long Enviro 200 74 (DU60 LOJ) on 15 & 23 November.

With thanks to Ipswich Transport Society Journal, Ipswich Buses Enthusiast Facebook Group, Bustimes.



Opposite: In EBM 689 it was reported that from 31 August 2021 service 93/A had a revised timetable and was re-routed in Colchester, now leaving Ipswich Road at Rovers Tye, operating via Highwoods Approach, Brinkley Grove Road, Mill Road, and Turner Road to serve the General Hospital and North Station, then using North Hill to enter / leave the Town Centre. 60 (PJ54 YZT) is seen on part of the new route, on Turner Road passing the hospital on 5 October 2021. 60 still has the Scania name below the windscreen, but the other Scania OmniDekkas, 61/62/63 have lost this feature. **Alan Moore**

VECTARE

by Chris Stewart

New Vehicle
Mercedes-Benz Sprinter RX71 TGK was illustrated at Ingatestone Station on 16 October 2021 in last month's issue, but it has now gained Vectare vinyls. It is seen on route 381 on Houblons Hill in Coopersale on 1 December. Both **Steven Quy**. It has been numbered 206.



Disposals
Further to EBM 690, it is believed that, as well as 302-3, Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus 301/4 were also sold to Stotts, Oldham.

Services
Further to EBM 691, and as reported in 'Service Revisions' above, from 15 November Vectare reinstated normal timetables for services 61/C & 62.

With thanks to LOTS.



Other Operators

by Roger A Smith

Acme Bus, Widdington
KX65 HYZ, a Mercedes-Benz Tourismo C53FT, is here from Kealy, Kanturk, in the Irish Republic, where it was registered as 161-C-2688.

AH Minibuses, Little Clacton
KVC C24F bodied Mercedes-Benz 0814D, registration SN05 FDF, has gone from here to CVA, Doncaster (dealers).

Airport Bus, Stansted Airport
BX65 WBP, a Scania K360EB with Caetano C49FL body, is here from Lamb, Hazel Grove, Greater Manchester.

Arrow Taxis
Mercedes-Benz Sprinter / EVM Cityline RE69 UVM has joined the fleet from Ellen Vale Coach Company, Fletchertown, Lake District. Arrow now have six EVM Citylines. Ford Transit EX03 WKM is now being operated by Banyards Taxis, Maldon.

King's Coaches, Stanway
New here is KC20 ABC, a tri-axle Mercedes-Benz Tourismo, C53FT. It was delivered from Evobus (UK) Ltd, Coventry on 22 October 2021, it should have been delivered in April 2020 but was delayed due to the pandemic. In exchange, KC60 ABC, a MAN / Van Hool TX16 (C53FT) went to Evobus, but by 26 October had moved on to Simpsons Coaches, Fraserburgh.

Klarners, Colchester
SF09 AFE, an Optare Versa V1110 (B38F) is here from Llew Jones, Llanrwst, North Wales, and has been re-registered as T60 KCL.

Martin (Mike's Coaches), Pitsea
H49/27F Alexander bodied Volvo B7TL, registration KP51 WBT, is here from First South West, Cornwall.

With thanks to Peter Mobbs, John Podgorski and the PSV Circle.

Editor's Note: The photo on page 27 of EBM 691 of Fords of Althorne YN06 BUS should have been credited to **Roger A Smith**. My apologies to Roger for this omission.

Below: Essex CC route C392 was cut back from Rye House to Hoddesdon Clock Tower from 1 June 2021. Epping Forest Community Transport Mercedes-Benz Sprinter FJ13 CYH approaches the terminal stop on 11 November 2021. This is opposite the Clock Tower; the vehicle then runs dead down to the Hoddesdon Ring Road Roundabout before coming back to pick up at the stop on other side of road. **Owen Woodliffe**



An Early Continental Tour Experience

by Alan Osborne

All photos by **the author**.

By 1968 I had already visited a number of European countries and I held a full British Passport. However, my younger brother had never ventured abroad, but was interested in making a trip. He was aware that it was quite easy to get a British Visitors at the Post Office, valid for one year, and had seen a day tour to France advertised by our local Travel Agent. At that time, in the early days of the ENEG, Eastern National had kindly circulated regular publicity material for use in the News Sheet. A 'No Passport' day trip to France was featured, which immediately aroused my brother's interest. On the tour, British subjects would be issued with an 'Identity Card' (in lieu of Passport) for use on one occasion only. So, in August, I booked a couple of £4 tickets, that's about £60 at 2021 prices. The coach would be coming from Colchester (dep. 0710) via Witham and Chelmsford to Brentwood (0815). A local pick up in Romford was advertised, from the long established coach stop at 17/9, Eastern Avenue (near North Street), as used by Eastern Counties and Grey Green Express Services. Incidentally, the Romford ring Road (St. Edwards Way) was still under construction at this time.

So we made our way to the coach stop, by RT on the 86 to Romford Station and then another on the 103 along North Street to the Parkside Hotel, where there were five other people gathered for the tour, and eagerly awaited the arrival of our luxury coach. However, we were all somewhat dismayed when at about 0755 a dual purpose Bristol MW (class 1400) approached the stop. The driver opened the doors and shouted "France". Once on board he explained that this was just the feeder service to join the tour coach in Brentwood. The excursion coach was 413, one of a batch of four Bristol RESH6Gs with Duple 36-seat coachwork, 413-416 (YTW 537-40F), which was just six months old. A swift run was made to Folkestone where the coach drove on to the 1040 Sealink sailing to Boulogne. The passengers remained in their seats for a customs check of the 'Identity Cards'. After alighting, there was time to relax in the lounges, and visit the shops and restaurants. Once back on the coach another id check was carried out on the French side. We then had a tour of the local countryside, stopping in the pretty village of Samur, before returning to Boulogne. There were then two options, to alight in the town and explore, or go on to the Hypermarket where the coach would park up. We opted for the former, my brother looked around the town and practised his schoolboy French, whilst I photographed a selection of local transport and also an East Kent coach on another tour. Then it was back on our coach at 1730 for the return ferry crossing and run to Brentwood (arriving 2130) where our trusty Bristol MW concluded the experience in Romford. A long but memorable day, my first continental tour experience, merci beaucoup et tres bien!

Below: I did not record the number of the feeder coach from Romford to Brentwood but in August 1968 1413, 1417 and 1422 were allocated to Brentwood. I photographed 1422 (201 YVX) the next month, on 22 September 1968, at Brentwood garage on an ENEG coach tour. The blinds have been suitably adjusted for a rare Friday-only working. The Bristol FLF /ECW coach alongside was the vehicle used for the Group tour, two-month old 2611(AVW 402F), in the livery that inspired that currently on First Essex 37986.



Three photos I took of the buses in Boulogne, with registrations all ending '62'. French registrations at the time ended with two numbers, which referred to the local Departmente, 62 being Pas-de-Calais.
Below: Bus number 27 was an early Brossel in the local Boulogne fleet. Note the EN registration!
Bottom: Number 15 in the local Boulogne fleet was a later Brossel BL55 with Jonkheere bodywork built in Belgium. Brossel was taken over by Leyland shortly afterwards and the name was then discontinued.





Below: An elderly (note the BV registration, as opposed to EN and FT registrations on the two previous photos, registrations were issued alphabetically) French country bus of unknown origin, but rather quaint. Bottom: A more familiar shape at the same location was DJG 613C, an AEC Reliance with Park Royal C49F bodywork, new in 1965, on a well loaded East Kent day tour to France. There was a later Essex connection in that the previous vehicle in the batch, DJG 612C, became a regular vehicle on Bordabus route 6 from Abridge via Chigwell Row to Brentwood in the early 1980s. Another Bordabus vehicle is pictured on page 11.





Postscript: Trips to Paris



Above: Since our tour coach 413 parked up at the Hypermarket in Boulogne, I was not able to photograph it. However, I travelled on another of the batch, 416 (YTW 540F), with CP (Coach Pool) depot plates, on a later weekend continental trip, to Paris in April 1970.
Below: The Paris transport system is operated by RATP (Regie Autonome des Transports Parisiens), currently owners of London United amongst other UK bus companies. 3532 was a 1937 Renault TN4H seen in Paris, also in April 1970, close to where our Bristol RESH coach 416 was parked, as seen in the photo above.



I had also visited the French capital in September 1966 (aboard RTL867, which is illustrated on page 13) when the earlier bonneted Renaults were around. These had become the transport icons of Paris rather like the RTs in London.

Right: This view was taken at Porte D'Orleans, the terminus of ligne (line) 128. 2497 is a Renault TN6 dating from the early 1930s with back entrance and platform much favoured by Parisenne passengers. The red diagonal line across the route number, which can just be made out, is a bar, which is 'barre' in French pronounced bar-ray. This indicates a short or part route working or possibly an extra bus. The route number was on a stencil. The red bar was stored out of the way when not required and pushed into place by a mechanical lever pivoted on the left when needed. The Paris bus livery, whilst a darker green, was similar to that of the Eastern National DP MW illustrated on page 27.



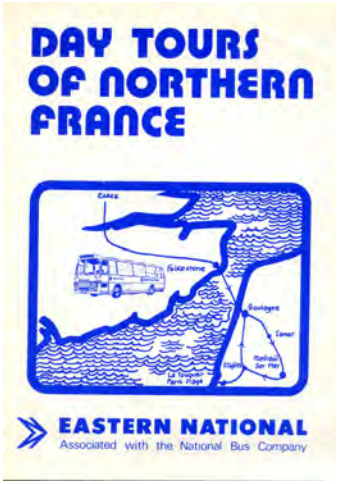
Right: Parisienne passengers liked to travel on the rear open platform of the old Renault which made them so iconic, as seen in the rear view of TN6, 2367.



Below R: The RTL party visited the Paris Transport Museum to see former London Transport RT2657 (LYR 641), re-registered to 48-SV-75 (75 = Paris). With Paris Renaults on the left, two transport icons together. The RT is displaying route 78 to Peckham Rye. The slip board reads "To & From the Oval". At the time there were many RTs still operating in Essex, and as noted above, we made our way to the pick-up point on two RTs on our August 1968 trip to Boulogne.



Below: The cover of the 1973 EN leaflet, the last year before National Travel (SE) took over.



SUPERNATIONAL

by Richard Delahoy

When it was introduced at the beginning of the 1970s, the Leyland National was the epitomy of standardisation in the bus world. A very limited choice of specifications, lengths, colours and interiors - and how we hated it at the time! Opinions mellow over time and now the type attracts interest when the relatively few that have been preserved appear at rallies and running days. One such example represents a major deviation from the standard spec. "Super National", JMY 120N, was new in 1974 and took the basic body shell but kitted out as a luxurious mobile executive suite. It appeared at the Commercial Motor Show in 1974 and was then operated by National Travel (South East) which had brought together the coaching activities of Tillings Travel, Timpsons and Samulesons from January 1974, with Eastern National's remaining coaches being added in May that year. With headquarters at the former Timpsons garage in Catford, NTSE also operated from Crayford, Croydon, Victoria and - relevant to our area of coverage - Prittlewell and Kelvedon, these latter two being former Eastern National depots.

The Super National was a development of the earlier Leyland Business Commuter model. Writing at the time of its launch, Commercial Motor described how "this vehicle is to be marketed to top bracket firms seeking a boardroom which can cruise at 70mph [really?], or can provide luxury meeting facilities anywhere a coach can be parked". It was designed for a crew of two - driver and secretary/hostess - and had 26 seats in a mix of armchair layout and at the back, couches facing tables. There was a toilet immediately behind the driver and a cloak cupboard over the nearside front wheel. Other equipment included TV, radio, video player and radio telephone. There was a webasto heater and a water boiler for hot drinks.

Although based at Catford - where I took the **top photo opposite** on 28 February 1976 - JMY 120N was to be found in Essex from time to time. Dave Edwards and Paul Smith both recall seeing it at Kelvedon, while David Smith saw it on the forecourt at Duke Street in Chelmsford (with a notice saying "Keep Out"!) and Alan Symes examined it inside EN's Central Works on the pits. Paul Harvey found it at the Showbus rally in 1978.

JMY 120N passed to National Travel (London) in 1979 as part of an NBC reorganisation; I've not been able yet to trace the date when they withdrew it, but it then passed through various hands, the interior being substantially modified a number of times, still as a corporate meeting/hospitality/training unit. Finally it passed into preservation but in 2017 was sold on to a church group. Current owner Craig Schofield bought it in 2018 and is steadily restoring it. It appeared at the Black Cat Travel open day on 7 November 2021 where Paul Harvey saw it (a photo of another bus taken by Paul at the open day is on page 21), and I caught up with it the following Sunday at the Dewsbury Bus Museum open day (14 November) as seen in **the lower picture opposite**. The exterior looks superb but there are still some finishing touches to complete; I do like the SUPER NATIONAL sign where the PAYE sign would usually be to the right of the doors! Craig kindly described some of the restoration work and show me round the interior which is unrestored and will take considerable effort to return to its original state as it was heavily rebuilt a number of times through its life. You can follow progress through his Facebook page, search for "Project Super National".



It was parked close to another oddity, a Guy Wulfrunian, the reason for my visit to Dewsbury (or, more accurately, Ravensthorpe) which had some tenuous links to Essex and will be illustrated in next month's issue.



Left: Here's the cover of the promotional brochure used to advertise the coach, courtesy of Craig Schofield.





Rear Cover Captions

More photos by **Richard Delahoy** of the Ensignbus Heritage Running Day on 4 December. **Top**: a new route this year linked Lakeside to the Purfleet Heritage Centre and the newly opened RAF Hornchurch Heritage Centre. At the latter, in the turning circle at Miramar Way used by TfL service 256, RT8 of 1940 is resplendent in the morning sun on the first X54 journey. **Bottom**: long Routemaster WLT 882 displays the fleet number applied when it was new, ER882 ('Extended Routemaster') - that was changed to the more familiar RML882 before entry into service. The Wimpy bar in Station Road Upminster seems an appropriate background for this 1961 bus.





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