

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 695 March 2022



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



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NIBS Wheel Forward StreetLites

NIBS own two of the more unusual wheel forward Wrightbus StreetLites, 33 seaters, but it is rare to see them together to photograph. The first photo below was taken in Brentwood High Street on 18 June 2020, 342 (MX61 BCE), new to Enterprise, Peterborough, in front was on a break on route 31, and 341 (MX11 CZR), new to Supertravel, Speke, behind was on route 269, these days normally operated by a double-decker but during the first lockdown a small vehicle was sufficient. The second photo was taken at Brentwood Station on 21 July 2021, again 342 in front on route 31 with 341 behind about to take up service on route 81. Both have been repainted, with greater areas of yellow and new style & repositioned fleet names. Both **Adam Kelleher**





Above: Stephensons Enviro 200 474 (EU65 EOK) on route 38A in Halstead High Street on 12 February 2022, passing Sainsbury's which is on the site of the former Eastern National garage which closed 38 years ago, after service on 3 March 1984.

David Moth

Another Month, Another Different Livery for First Essex.

As reported on page 12, First Essex have acquired four StreetLite Max vehicles from Southampton in 'City Red' livery.

Front Cover: 63063 is seen at Colchester Bus Station on route 65 on 25 February 2022, with all Southampton branding removed.

Robert Appleton

Right: The same bus later the same day, at Highwoods, Colchester.

Adam Kelleher



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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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The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 9th 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

Service Revisions Sub-Editor

As members may remember, the above role was advertised in January, unfortunately there have been no applications for the role. We really appreciate Paul Harvey's continuing support, but the report in this EBM will be his last. If this important column is to continue in its current form we need a volunteer to come forward asap. A reminder that the main driver is using bus company websites and social media platforms on a daily basis, plus Essex, Hertfordshire & Suffolk CC Public Transport websites. This is all supported by LOTS TLB and Omnibus Society (Eastern) News Magazines plus of course Notices & Proceedings (N&P) published weekly by the Traffic Commissioner's Office. The Group can help with Panther Travel, Stephensons and Arriva Southend & Colchester information through contacts at operators. Paul is prepared to offer support, so it won't be a big bang from day one. If you can help, please contact myself or Adam Kelleher (details on Page 2).

Ian Ransom, Chair

The Running Card by Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Saturday / Sunday 25/26 March: Discovery Tours, Acton LT Depot.

Saturday 26 March: Heritage Operation on Route 101 (Wanstead-North Woolwich).

Saturday 2 April: South East Bus Festival, Kent Showground, Detling, Kent.

Sunday 10 April: Spring Gathering, London Bus Museum Brooklands, KT13 0QU.

Sunday 17 April: Easter Transport Festival, Museum of Power, Maldon CM9 6QA.

Saturday / Sunday 23/24 April: Magnificent Motors, Eastbourne Sea Front.

Monday 1 May: King Alfred Running Day, Winchester.

Sunday 8 May: Bus & Coach Day Mid Norfolk Railway, Dereham. busday@mnr.org.uk

Sunday 8 May: London to Brighton HCVC Run.

Saturday 14 May: Theydon Bois Transport Bazaar, 1100-1500, Village Hall, CM16 7IG.

Sunday 15 May: Fenland Bus Festival, Whittlesea.

Saturday / Sunday 2/3 July: Vintage Transport Weekend, North Norfolk Railway, NR25 6AJ. Free heritage bus service Holt-Sheringham. bus@johnstewart.co.uk

Sunday 24 July: Steam Gala Day, Thursford, NR21 0AS. bus@johnstewart.co.uk

Sunday 21 August: Lodge Coaches Bus & Show, High Easter, CM1 4QR.

Sunday 11 September: King's Lynn Heritage Open Day, PE30 IDS.

Saturday / Sunday 18/19 September: '40's Weekend North Norfolk Railway. martin.westcliff@gmail.com

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

Coach Tour

Saturday 11 June. Provisional date for an Omnibus Society tour celebrating 90 years of Eastern National, using former EN Bristol MW coach 7017 HK. With pick-ups at Tilbury Ferry, Grays, Laindon and Chelmsford, the tour will recreate parts of the major cross-Essex routes 51/53 and 19/19A. It will return via Southend and Chelmsford. For further details and to book, please email Andrew Gipson at andrewgipson@btinternet.com. EBEG members welcome on this tour with bookings being taken on a first come, first served basis with priority being given to Omnibus Society Members.

Group Tours

We are still hoping to restart our own Group Tours this year, but would like information from the membership about what they would be interested in. It would be very helpful if as many people as possible could answer the following three questions:

What operators would you like to visit (assuming we can get their permission)?

Which town / station would you like to board the tour at?

What day of the week is best?

Please send your replies to Wayne Bell, Tours Organiser at lynxrnli79@gmail.com. Thank you.

Bus Times Magazine

William Morrison has six issues of the magazine 'Bus Times' for disposal, Oct/Nov 86 (first issue), Dec/Jan 87, Feb/Mar 87, Nov 87, Dec 87 and Jan 88. Free to a good home. Pay the postage or collect. Please contact William at william6102@sky.com.

Essex Bus Magazine Extra

A reminder that the first issue of this free magazine should be coming through your letterboxes approximately three weeks after you receive this issue of EBM.

Long Service, Storm Eunice and City Status

Long Service

In Arriva Fleet News last month we made mention of Keith Sadler's 44 years of continuous service with Colchester Borough Transport, Network Colchester and Arriva and asked if any other EBM reader / contributor can beat that record. David Edwards, a driver for First Essex at Colchester, writes "I can (just!)", 7 February 2022 saw my 45th year continuously with Eastern National / First Essex, having started as a junior Traffic Clerk at Head Office, New Writtle Street on that date in 1977."

However, both Keith and David still have some way to go to match Kenneth Mead who is now retired but who achieved 51 years, from October 1964 to November 2015, with Eastern National / First Essex, 1964-1979 Clacton clerical, 1979-1995 Colchester Operating Manager, 1995-2015 Clacton driving.

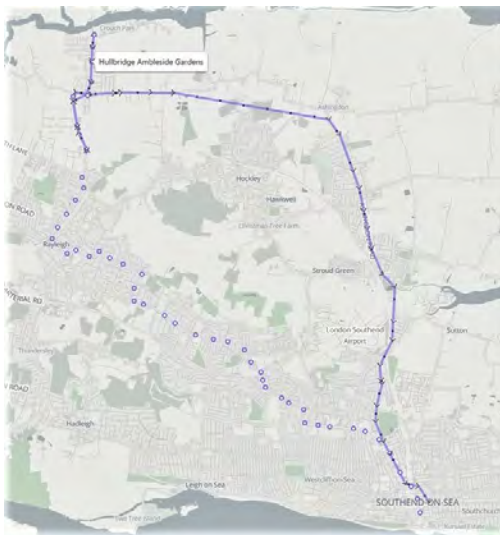
Storm Eunice

Strong winds hit Essex on Friday 18 February, with the worst weather being in the afternoon. A rare red weather warning was issued for London and the South East. Schools were closed, and during the day, c2c, TfL Rail and Greater Anglia services were all suspended. The first two recommenced services in the evening, but Greater Anglia not until the next day and then with many cancellations over the weekend. At Thorpe-le-Soken issues with the overhead wires broke pantographs on two trains, Panther Travel buses took passengers to Clacton and Wivenhoe.

For buses, many routes were diverted or curtailed to avoid rubble, unsafe buildings and fallen trees, and many were cancelled altogether. Some double-decker buses were replaced by saloons. In Southend, Chichester Road (the main route to & from the Travel Centre) was closed due to an unsafe building. This closure continued until early afternoon on Monday and affected Arriva, First Essex, Stephenson's and Arrow Taxis.

One of the more extreme diversions affected First Essex 33405, a Trident from Hadleigh. Soon after departing from Hullbridge for Rayleigh and Southend on the 1319 trip on service 20, the driver encountered a blocked road. After turning the bus round at a farm entrance, the bus had only one possible route available to go anywhere, due to low bridges, weight restrictions and rivers. This involved returning to Coventry Corner at Hullbridge and then proceeding via Lower Hockley, Ashingdon, Golden Cross, Rochford, Warner's Bridge, Manners Way and Victoria Avenue to pick up the last mile or so of the normal route into Southend. The dots on the map show the intended route and the solid line the actual. Buses on the 20 then turned short at Rayleigh Station until the road was reopened at lunchtime the next day. Map from **Bustimes**.

More details in individual company reports.



Many thanks to all the staff that did their best to keep services running in very difficult conditions.

Southend-on-Sea City Status

This was granted on 1 March, see opposite page for more details. New signs have been installed along roads into the city.
Southend-on-Sea City Council

Southend Pier Train Naming

by Richard Delahoy

Southend-on-Sea finally achieved City status on Tuesday 1 March when Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall presented the official letters patent to the Council, now renamed Southend-on-Sea City Council.



The royal couple also visited the Pier where they officially named the first of the new battery powered trains in honour of the murdered Southend West MP Sir David Amess who had campaigned tirelessly for City status (see last month for details of the trains and November 2021 re Sir David).

Sadly they didn't have time for a ride to the end of the Pier!

The pier was closed that day, preventing us from photographing the naming ceremony, so these pictures are courtesy of the Council's official Flickr site (under Creative Commons CCO 1.0 Universal licence).

Frustratingly the train has still not entered public service and no expected date was known as we went to press. Until it does, replacing the Bravo unit from the 1986 stock, the second new train cannot be delivered as there is no room to store it.



Letters

Doug Brown, ex-Eastern National driver from Brentwood

CBC by DB from BD

I expect some readers are wondering what the louvres are at either side of the destination screen on many Eastern National Bristol FLFs (and one LD) and also on the Guy Wulfrunian illustrated in EBM 693. They are part of the Cave-Browne-Cave (CBC) heating system. I once took one such FLF out of Southend Seaway. En route to London Wood Green, at Kent Elms, I had a stop and my conductor got out, he had his tie off and was in shirtsleeves. He said can you turn the heaters off we are all being cooked in here. I had an air switch in the cab, but did not hear the shutters move - they worked like venetian blinds. I got out of the cab to have a look and found they were full of leaves and twigs where they had been open all winter. I got another bell to stop in a layby on the Eastwood Road where I noticed a man outside one of the houses on a ladder cleaning the upstairs windows. This gave me an idea. I got out of the cab again and walked down the garden path to my ladder man. I said, "Excuse me Mr Window Cleaner, can I borrow your ladder, the heater vents on my bus are full of autumn and I cannot turn them off". He looked down at me and replied "No, a bloke your size will break all the rungs of my ladder and I won't be able to get to my customers today." Then he added "I will do it for you." He put the ladder under the destination box and went to his van and came back with a distemper brush and got to work. Leaves fell like confetti at a wedding. After a few moments he said, "All done". I took him to the bus door and told my passengers that this man had turned the heaters off. He got a round of applause and my conductor gave him a pound note. This made Mr Window Cleaner a very happy man and I saw him waving the pound note in the nearside mirror as I pulled away.



Above: Doug's tale took place in the mid-1960s, but here's a photo of an FLF with CBC heating taken in Southend Bus Station on 3 August 1975. When it opened in 1974 the bus station became the replacement departure point to Southend Seaway for London routes. However, in this photo, 2849 (NTW 942C) is on route 27 to Canvey Leigh Beck. 2849 became a show bus at Hadleigh depot and is now preserved. **Richard Delahoy**

David Edwards, current First Essex driver from Colchester

Follow Ups to EBMs 693/4

A reply to Mike Allen's query in EBM 693 page 9 re service 68 and Haye Lane. The last journey on ECC service 68 from Highwoods terminates at Abberton Crossroads (formerly known as 'The Lion' which is no longer there) and has done so now for at least two years (previously it continued onto Fingringhoe). It does not operate via Haye Lane (although for some reason this has now been made a timing point on this journey). At Abberton the journey turns left into Fingringhoe Road, stops opposite Edward Marke Drive and then reverses into there and returns dead to Colchester. When service 67 journeys have to terminate at Abberton due to high tide covering The Strood on the approach to Mersea Island, some drivers also carry out this turn

around. Others (including myself) choose to turn right, then left into Peldon Road and turn around in a lay-by further down the road and await their time there. In all my time at Colchester, Haye Lane has not been used by a registered bus service, however I have it in mind it has been used occasionally as a diversionsary route on the Fingringhoe service if Fingringhoe Road has been closed for roadworks.

Gary Sharpe from Colchester

Osborne's of Tollesbury

I enjoyed Robert Appleton's photo feature on Osborne's in EBM 694, it is always nice to see other people's pictures of a fleet I was so close to. There are two small things I wish to comment on, probably just 'typos'. GVX 658B was a 2U3RA, no M, to have that M it would need to be six feet shorter, have a smaller engine and one less gear in the box!* The Leopards that replaced the Seddons were MNK427/9/30V, not L, I am sure this was just a slip of the finger on keyboard. The driver of DFS 800S on page 21 is yours truly! I did like that vehicle but the reasons they stayed only a year were many and varied.

Moving on to Richard's photo of 8071 ML in Blind Spot, he is quite correct about the Bridgemaster dome, it came from ex-East Kent YIG 808, in the fleet for two years but by then withdrawn due to a frame failure. One afternoon Gilbert Osborne asked two fitters (I was one) if they would do overtime to repair accident damage after it struck a tree at Heybridge Basin on Maldon service whilst avoiding a car. We gathered tools together while a driver took a replacement bus out, returning with 8071 ML. When it pulled on to the forecourt Gilbert muttered under his breath and went to change the next day's allocations, the front nearside and first side window were gone, along with the roof, in fact it was a half cab on both decks! It was of some surprise that the two domes were slightly different when our body man at the time, Eric, tackled the job, resulting in the window line mismatch, only really noticeable by us enthusiasts. He did a great job, it never leaked.

* The wrong chassis designation came from a contemporary issue of British Bus Fleets Number 4, East Anglia. Nice to correct it after all these years!

Right: In comparison with Richard's photo in EBM 694 here is Osborne's AEC Renown / Park Royal 18 (8071 ML) with its original (non-stepped) roof on layover at Colchester Bus Station in December 1967. On the left is H C Chambers & Son, Bures, EAW 859, a Bedford OB / Duple C29F new in 1948. On the right is Eastern National 1337 (2727 VX), a Bristol MW5G / ECW B45F allocated to Halstead depot.
Robert Appleton



Sue Burden from Braintree

Leyland National White Bands

I liked seeing Robert Appleton's picture of Leyland National 1782, PEV 694R, with its white stripe in last month's EBM. The other National in the north of Essex that still had its stripe in the 1980s was 1783, PEV 695R, at Silver End (Editor's note: see 1970s and 1990s photos, but not 1980s, of this bus on the inside rear cover). On this one, the stripe went along the sides and under the windscreen, but was not on the rear.

1782 had on the rear dome a distinct dent, almost in the middle, which it carried for the rest of its days. This was because any attempt to replace a panel at the back of the roof of a National would have involved removing the pod, and so it was more trouble than worth. 1812 (VNO 735S) and one of the LJN xxxP Nationals also had noticeable dents on the cove panels right at the back.

In 1986 a number of United Counties buses, including Leyland Nationals, came temporarily on loan to Chelmsford. These had white bands. They included OVV 517R, the Leyland National 1 and a half. This had had the radiator moved to the front, with Leyland National 2 lower front panels, and custom-made upper panels on the front dash. At the rear, it had an empty silver hole where the radiator would normally be, and it was really strange hearing the familiar Leyland National clatter without seeing a fan going round and round.

14 February 2022

31 Basildon to First Data Janus House (M-F) **NIBS** revised timetable providing three journeys each direction.

26 February

800 Hatfield Peverel to Boreham (S, Su) **Vectare** special shuttle service on 26 & 27 February only due to road closure affecting the Boreham Interchange (A12).

Right: Enviro 200 317 (YX16 OBS) on the route in Hatfield Peverel on 27th. **Ian Mahoney**

28 February

Arrow Taxis / Essex & Suffolk DRT & First Essex route diversion in Chelmsford City Centre due to Duke Street & Tindal Street being closed until 15 April. See also pages 15 & 16.

12 March

667 Ilford to Chigwell West Hatch School (Sch) **Go Ahead London** TfL school service withdrawn and replaced by **Stagecoach London**.

14 March

677 Ilford to Debden (Sch) **Stagecoach London** TfL school service withdrawn and replaced by **Go Ahead London**.

17 March

Z4 Pitsea Broadway to Tilbury Amazon (D) **Ensignbus** service withdrawn.

18 March

Z2 Canning Town to Tilbury Amazon (D) **Ensignbus** service withdrawn.

Z4 Pitsea Broadway to Tilbury Amazon (D) **First Essex** new service replacing Ensignbus.

19 March

Z1 Aveley to Tilbury Amazon (D) **Ensignbus** revised timetable.

Z2 Canning Town to Tilbury Amazon (D) **First Essex** new service replacing Ensignbus.

27 March

97/98 Clacton to Walton (D) **Go Ahead Hedingham** revised evening Monday to Saturday timetable.

99 Walton to Clacton (M-S) **Go Ahead Hedingham** the 1950 journey from Walton retimed to operate at 1935.

2 April

68 Lakeside / Leigh Station to Southend Pier (D) **Ensignbus** reintroduction of summer open top service operating every 30 minutes during high season and every 60 minutes low season.

19 April

13/13A Waltham Cross to Epping (M-S) **Vectare** revised timetable with introduction of service 13C between Waltham Cross and North Weald early mornings and early evenings. Service number S13 deleted.

14 Waltham Cross to Waltham Abbey (M-S) **Vectare** enhanced Monday to Friday timetable introduced and Saturday service withdrawn. Service numbers 14B & 14C deleted.

19/19C Epping to Ongar (M-S) **Vectare** service withdrawn.

22 Waltham Cross to Waltham Abbey Shernbrook Road (M-S) **Vectare** reduced Monday to Friday timetable and enhanced Saturday timetable introduced. Service 22A introduced between Waltham Abbey Skillet Hill & Waltham Cross. Service number 22C deleted.

Editor's Note. As this is Paul's last 'Service Changes' I would like to personally thank him for all his work over the years and the help he has given me over the last 18 months. Paul will still be involved with the magazine in the essential role of proof reading (along with Richard) and spotting my mistakes before they go to print!



As this issue went to press, Vectare were preparing to take over the operation of ECC's Chelmsford Park & Ride services from First Essex from Monday 7 March.

Service 701 will link Sandon to Parkway and Chelmsford City Centre.

Service 702 will link Chelmer Valley to Anglia Ruskin University and Chelmsford City Centre.

This is how the services were originally run when Sandon opened in 2006 and Chelmer Valley in 2011. They were later combined into one through service linking both sites via the city centre. Various changes and suspensions occurred over the last two years during the Covid pandemic. The final pattern operated by First Essex was 700, Sandon circular, so equivalent to new Vectare 701, and 701, a through service linking both sites.

There will be two diversions and temporary timetables in place for six weeks after launch whilst major roadworks take place in Chelmsford City Centre but there will still be an increase in the number of buses running. Once the roadworks finish and the full timetables start after Easter, the Sandon service will increase further to run up to every seven minutes at peak times with Chelmer Valley continuing to run every 10 minutes. Full timetables and fares information as well as route maps for the diversions can be found on the Vectare website.

We understand from the company that the majority of First Essex P&R drivers have transferred to Vectare under TUPE, and that a fleet of mainly new Enviro 200 MMCs (hired from Dawson Rentals) will be in use until they are replaced in April by brand new Enviro 200 MMCs custom built to Vectare's own specification. The first on-hire vehicle, YX22 OGP, is seen below in Victoria Road South on 4 March, three days before Vectare were due to take over the service. This is also the first 22 reg vehicle to feature in EBM. **Steven Quay**

Also in the Chelmsford area, as noted and illustrated on the opposite page, Vectare operated a frequent service 800 on Saturday 26 & Sunday 27 February connecting Hatfield Peverel station with Boreham during the closure of the A12 interchange for continuing major road works. One Sprinter worked on the Saturday with Enviro 200 317 (YX16 OBS) on the Sunday.

The photo of repainted Vectare Enviro 200 MMC YX69 NWB on page 32 of last month's EBM was taken at Anwell Court, Waltham Abbey.

With thanks to the company.



Fares

These were increased from 20 February, all Colchester and Harlow Adult Singles increased by 10p. At Southend, Adult Singles were revised to be: less than 0.5 miles, £1.60; between 0.5 miles and 2 miles, £2.10; less than 8 miles, £3.00; more than 8 miles, £3.50. Many day and period ticket prices were also revised, see <https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/latest-news/essex-fares> for details.

Colchester

Acquired Vehicles

To service dates for the remaining ex-Guildford buses: 3990 - 12 February; 3991 - 18 February; 3992 -28 February. We still await the entry to service of the new Park & Ride fleet, expected to be from 7 March. Details next month!

Withdrawn Vehicles

3415 was withdrawn on 17 February and 3417 on 11th.

Vehicles on Loan

Two Southend Enviro 400 double-deckers, 6510/2, were borrowed for rail replacement, Colchester to Ipswich, on Sunday 6 February. Colchester's own double-decker, 4459, was also used for one trip. Then to cover for a shortage of serviceable buses, Southend loaned 3935 to Colchester from 9 February until returned on 15 February.

Southend

Acquired Vehicles

The final ex-Guildford bus, 4212, had still not entered service at the time of going to press.

Withdrawn Vehicles

3935 was withdrawn on 8 February. It then went on loan to Colchester for a few days as noted above. Already withdrawn 3960 was removed by a dealer on 10 February.

Repaints

6500 is the latest Enviro 400 to be repainted into the lighter blue scheme; it re-entered service on 22 February, initially without vinyls. It was done at ADL (Harlow) following accident repairs and like 6503, it has a blue band above the windscreen; on 6505/15 this is black.

Storm Eunice

Further to page 4, the closure of Chichester Road (the main route to & from the Travel Centre) due to an unsafe building during Storm Eunice on Friday 18 February, which continued until early afternoon on Monday 21st, saw a number of diversions. West / northbound 7/8/9 and eastbound 6 did a loop from the Travel Centre via Tylers Avenue, Clifftown Road, Nelson Street, Capel Terrace (see photo opposite page), Alexandra Street, Heygate Avenue, Church Road, Chancellor Road and Queensway. Buses approaching the Travel Centre from the north / east used Queensway then either York Road, Baltic Avenue and Tylers Avenue, or Chancellor Road and Church Road, depending on their next direction of travel.

Harlow

Acquired Vehicle

4181, YJ09 MKF, Optare Versa V1110, B38F, new to Arriva Midlands North, 2992, 05/09

Acquired January 2022, ex High Wycombe depot, and renumbered from 2992 to 4181 to bring it into the same number sequence as the other Versas (similarly to the other recently acquired ex High Wycombe Versa 2990 (YJ09 MKD) being renumbered 4180 as reported last month). First seen in service on 12 February.

Vehicle Not Acquired

Further to EBM 694, during February Optare Versa 2401 (YI57 EKF) has again been in service at Ware. Although acquired by Arriva Herts & Essex from Guildford last December, it seems that this vehicle is not for Harlow after all and its use at Harlow for two days in January was just a loan.

Withdrawn Vehicles / Disposals

Optare Solo 1507 is withdrawn from service, it was last used on 5 January 2022.

Further to EBM 692, Optare Solo 1460, which moved from Harlow to Ware in October 2021, went for disposal to Hardwick's, Barnsley in December 2021.

Further to EBM 694, Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse 3815/26/74 have moved on from Hardwick's to Ellie Rose Travel, Hull.

Out of interest, whilst not a depot we usually cover, **Ware**'s Optare Versa 4188 (within the same number sequence as 'our' depots) was destroyed after suffering an engine fire whilst on route 251 at Hammond Street, Cheshunt on 4 February 2022. The other end of route 251 is within Essex at Waltham Abbey.

With thanks to John Card, Keith Sadler, Matthew Evans, Adam Kelleher, John Lidstone, LOTS and the M&D & East Kent Bus Club.



Above: On diversion in a loop around Southend *town* centre (*City* status was not granted officially until 1 March, see pages 4 & 5) due to Storm Eunice damage, 4209 (Y161 CIV), recently returned to Southend after its stay at Guildford, turns out of Capel Terrace on service 7 to Rayleigh on Monday 21 February. The diversion was lifted later that day. **Richard Delahoy**

Below: EBM 693 included a photo of Network Colchester Dart SLF 529 (later Arriva Colchester 3420) when only a few months old, taken on 3 April 2005. At the other end of the timeline, here is similar 3418 (SN54 HXE), new to Network Colchester as 366, at Highwoods, Colchester on 12 January 2022, two weeks before it was withdrawn. **Robert Appleton**



Acquired Vehicles

63061	SK63 KKB	SA9DSRXXX13141334	AJ354	B41F	10/13	First Hampshire & Dorset
63063	SK63 KKD	SA9DSRXXX13141336	AJ356	B41F	10/13	First Hampshire & Dorset
63064	SK63 KKE	SA9DSRXXX13141337	AJ357	B41F	10/13	First Hampshire & Dorset
63065	SK63 KKF	SA9DSRXXX13141338	AJ358	B41F	10/13	First Hampshire & Dorset

Wrightbus StreetLite Max Door Forward, from First Hampshire & Dorset at Southampton, collected by First Essex drivers and driven to Westway Depot, Chelmsford, on 13 February 2022. High backed seating.

In Urban 2 style livery, with red at the front and maroon at the back, the rear dividing line is made up of forward facing triangles, this is also repeated towards the front. The colours are similar to Heddingham livery. Unlike current Essex Bus livery there are only these two shades, not three. They had 'City Red' branding for route 3 when at Southampton but this was removed before they entered service with First Essex. 63061 had a 'Covid face mask' on its front when it arrived but this was also removed before it entered service. They were new in 'The Star' blue & gold livery to original Urban style layout but were repainted into their current livery in summer / autumn 2020.



63063 was seen on driver shuttles in Colchester on 17

& 19 February and was used on routes 61 and 68 on the afternoon and evening of 18th during Storm Eunice. 63063, 63064 and 63065 all then entered regular service at Colchester on Monday 21st. 63061 joined them in service at Colchester a week later on Monday 28th. It had still been at Westway on 25th. Its delay into service may have been caused by the removal of its 'mask'.

Above right: 63063 just arrived at Westway on 13 February showing its Southampton 'City Red' and route 3 branding. **David Edwards.**
Below: 63064, with branding removed ,at Westway on 19 February. **Derek Stebbing**



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, sh-driver shuttle.

Period 11 2021/22 (23 January - 19 February)

30564 CR (oos)-CF (oos)-Disposal, 30567 CR (oos)-Disposal, 31785 CR (oos)-Disposal, 32068 CR-CR (oos), 32477 CR (oos)-Disposal, 32478 CR (oos)-Disposal, 32485 CR (oos)-CF (oos)-Disposal, 32540 BN (oos)-BN, 33086 BN-BN (oos), 33404 HH-HH (oos), 33412 BN (oos)-BN, 33414 BN (oos)-BN, 37017 CR (oos)-CR, 42933 CR(sh)-CF-CF (oos), 42934 CF-CF (oos), 47653 BN (oos)-BN, 63061 FG-CF (oos), 63063 FG-CF (oos)-CR, 63064 FG-CF (oos), 63065 FG-CF (oos), 63341 CR (oos)-CR, 66794 CR-CF, 66825 BN(oos)-CF (DS)

32485 was collected by Ensignbus on 11 February. Exact dates not known for the other disposals, but all in February and so included in Period 11.

33404, the vehicle in red heritage Midland livery, has been out of service since 11 January. It was seen at Hadleigh on 14 February parked in the same position as 33095 had been prior to its disposal, minus its front bumper.

42933 was back in service from Chelmsford on route 42 on 7 February but only lasted in service for four days (engine). It was replaced on driver shuttle work at Colchester by 42930, but that was back in service at CF on 17th.

Vehicle on Loan

Driver trainer Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 66841 (MX05 CGF) arrived at Westway depot on 9 February 2022 from Leicester. However, it had gone by w/e 26 February, replaced as a trainer by 66825, see below.

Converted Vehicle

Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse 66825, which has been out of service since 3 September last year, has been converted to a permanent driver trainer. It has not been repainted and so retains Urban livery, although lower panels have been replaced and it no longer has a thin magenta stripe.

Disposals

Volvo B7TL / ALX400 30564, 30567, 31785, 32477, 32478, 32485 to Ensignbus, February 2022, then all on to Shelton Motors for scrap the same month.

Trident / ALX400 33376 to Ensignbus, 2 March 2022.

Further to last month, 33095 went to PVS, Carlton in January.

Tap & Cap Part 2

Following the launch of 'tap&cap' in Chelmsford on 2 January, see last month's EBM, it was introduced to the Colchester Zone on Saturday 26 February. Single fares within the zone were reduced from £2.90 to £2.50, although a day ticket increased from £4.30 to £4.40. Return fares were no longer available within just the zone. Details of adult fares (similar arrangements for child fares):

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Tap each time you get on the bus...	...you'll never pay more than £4. ⁴⁰ a day			...you'll never pay more than £2. ⁸⁰	...you'll never pay more than £1 a day		...you'll never pay anything!
1 st tap	£2. ⁵⁰	£2. ⁵⁰	£2. ⁵⁰	£2. ⁵⁰	£1	£1	FREE
2 nd tap	£1. ¹⁰	£1. ¹⁰	£1. ¹⁰	30p	FREE		
3 rd tap	40p	40p	40p	FREE			
4 th tap	40p	40p	40p				
any further taps that day	FREE						
...you'll never pay more than £18 a week!							

Storm Eunice

See also page 4. Services were severely affected during the day, with many diversions, curtailments and cancellations. In Colchester, double-deckers continued in use on town services but predominantly normal double-deck operations to Chelmsford (route 70: 66801, 66816, 66970, 67739, 67741) and Maldon (route 75: 63339, 66803, 66810, 66971, 67735) were replaced by single-deckers, except

for an early morning journey on 70 by 32673. 66811 was on the 0920 Harwich to Colchester 103 instead of the normal double-decker. At Chelmsford their double-deck allocation on 70 was also replaced by single-deckers (apart from one early morning return journey by 32482; 66797, 66813, 66872, 69429, 69433, 69434) as was route X30 to Stansted and Southend (67160 and Park & Ride liveried 67189, 67191, 67192 & 67196). At Basildon double-deckers were in service in the morning but were all taken out of use for the day at lunchtime. At Hadleigh double-deckers continued in service. Further to page 4, in Southend most buses were terminating at Victoria Station due to the closure of Chichester Road (the main route to & from the Travel Centre) due to an unsafe building. This closure continued until early afternoon on Monday 21st.

On Loan Driver Trainers

Below: Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 66841 (MX05 CGF) in Westway on 10 February 2022. **David Edwards**

Bottom: Mercedes-Benz Citaro 64017 (LT52 WXP) in Chichester Road, Southend, also on 10 February. **Richard Delahoy**



Area News & Workings

Colchester

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CR except where stated. All dates February 2022 except where stated.)

67741 retained its Christmas wrap well into February. It was seen on route 67 on 4 March with the bottom half removed but still retaining the top half.

32631, 32642 and 32676 were on loan from Chelmsford to Colchester over half-term week, 14-19 February.

66811 was on loan from Chelmsford to Colchester from 31 January to 22 February.

News of the Harwich routes (1 - 28 February 2022). Sixteen Volvo B7TLs plus Volvo B9TL 37140 worked on 103/104 during February, mainly on 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103. Volvo B7TLs working through to Harwich on 104, in date order were: 32628 and 37015 (3rd), 37006 and 37015 (22nd), 37010 (23rd) and 37004 (24th). Also 37016 was unusual on Sunday 102 on 20th.

As noted above, due to Storm Eunice, 66811, on loan from Chelmsford, worked the normal double-deck 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103 on 18th. 66811 also worked through to Harwich on Sunday 6th (102) and 12th & 14th.

All 11 Volvo B7RLEs, and 11 of the 12 ADL Enviro 300 allocated to CR worked on 102/103/104, 67756 was the one not spotted.

Only four StreetLites worked on 103/104 in this period, the highlight being 63064 in First Southampton red livery on 22nd.

Clacton routes. 74B: 32628 (8th, 15th), 37004 (18th part), 37005 (17th), 37017 (5 March), 37034 (11th), 37035 (1 March), 63333 (26th, 2 March), 63341 (9th), 63344 (12th), 66800 (21st, 3 March), 66816 (19th), 66970 (22nd), 67735 (7th), 67737 (4 March), 67741 (10th, 15th), 67750 (18th part, 23rd, 25th), 67805 (28th).

76 (in date order): 66801 (13th), 32530 (20th), 66800 (27th), 37007 (6 March).

Chelmsford

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CF except where stated. All dates February 2022 except where stated.)

First Essex have worked the Chelmsford Park & Ride services since they commenced, Sandon in 2006 and Chelmer Valley in 2011, but their last day was 5 March, with Vectare taking over from 7th (see page 9).

Unusual / Interesting workings. X10: 66795 & 69433 (both 16th), P&R liveried 67190 (18th) & 67193 (17th, 21st).

X30: Blue 67161 (21st), P&R liveried 67190 (17th) & 67194 (20th). See above for 18th.

36842 on school route 525 (4 March). 42944 & 44599 both on 70 (11th). Route 37 branded 44539 on 36 (11th). 44659 on 13/A & 14 (12th, 18th). 66818 on 57A (11th).

Blue Essex Airlink Scania continued on school route 620 and black P&R Enviro 200 MMCs continued on school route S33 throughout February. On Tuesdays-only 35 (and thus also on S33 those days) have been: 67192 (8th), 67190 (22nd), 67195 (1 March), 66812 on driver training (19th). With using service buses on training, 66825 being converted to a permanent driver trainer and two additional on-loan driver trainers (although one has now gone, see pages 13 & 14) there seems to be a big push going on at the moment on driver recruitment / training.

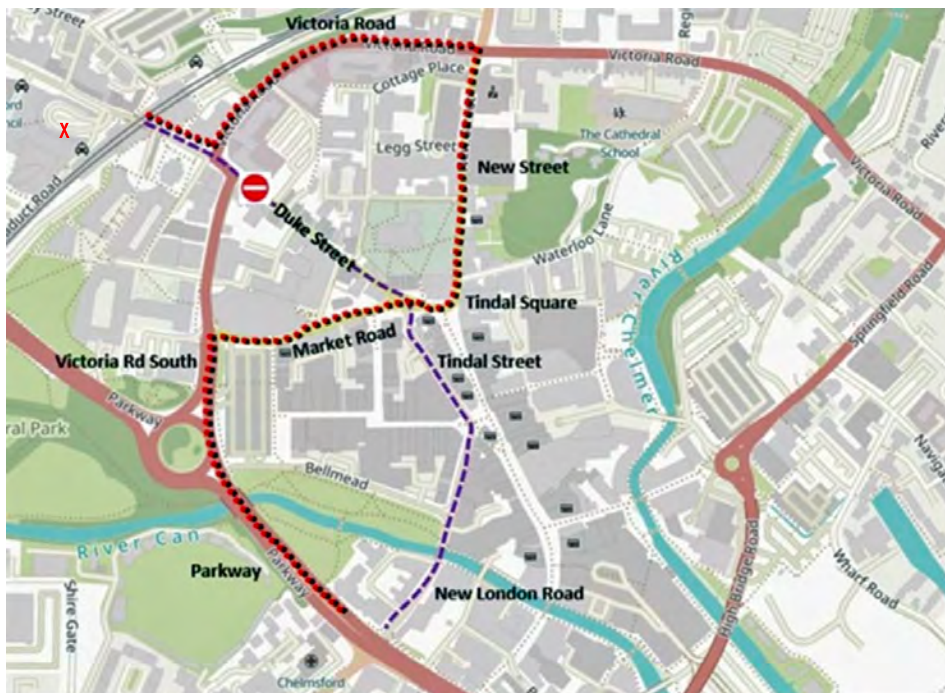
On 13th, CR67779 was loaned to Chelmsford for one trip on route 71C in the evening (1710 ex Colchester - although very late) after 66760 broke down in Osborne Street. It was then returned to Colchester out of service.

There are scheduled road works taking place on Duke Street, Chelmsford from 28 February - 20 March 2022. Duke Street is closed during this period between Victoria Road South and Market Road. Buses are unable to make a left turn from Tindal Square into Tindal Street. This affects all services that travel down Duke Street and Tindal Street into New London Road. All services divert via Victoria Road, New Street, Market Road and Victoria Road South - returning to normal line of route on Parkway. Park & Ride services (towards Sandon) are also affected and divert from Victoria Road / Victoria Road South, Duke Street - serving the bus stop opposite the Rail Station - continuing on via Coval Lane and returning to normal line of route on Parkway. Park & Ride services towards Chelmer Valley are not affected.



Above right: Alexander Dennis Dart / Pointer 42940 (MX56 HXZ) on route 45 diverted along Victoria Road on 2 March 2022.

David Mott



Above: Dashed lines: normal route, dotted lines: diversionary route. Note, when Duke Street is closed Tindal Street and the part of New London Road before Parkway also close by default, vehicles are unable to make a left hand turn from Tindal Square into Tindal Street.

We don't normally include maps of route diversions in EBM, but this one is also useful as it shows the usual route taken by buses from the bus station (marked with a red X in the top left corner) towards the centre of the city and out again and gives a good overview of the city centre roads. In the past we have referred to some of these roads in relation to service changes and diversions and doubtless will do so again in the future, so this will be helpful to refer to, especially for readers not familiar with Chelmsford. **First Essex**

Basildon & Hadleigh

(All vehicles listed below allocated to BN except where stated. All dates February 2022 except where stated.)

Route 9 continues to be mainly Enviro 400 operated, in the last month there have been one or two StreetLites each day, although on 24th & 5 March there were four StreetLites. Also, as noted above, there were no double-deck operations after lunchtime on 18th. Orange Enviro 400 33414 on the 9 on 22nd & 26th. Non-Enviro 400 double deckers reported have been 32249 (7th, 12th, 18th am only, 22nd), 32260 (7th, 11th, 22nd), 32526 (8th), 32540 (26th), 33186 (10th, 17th).

Routes 94/A continued to be mainly operated by either two StreetLites or one plus a mini-Enviro 200. On 17 February 44909 broke down on the 1103 from Basildon in Cranes Farm Road and was replaced by Volvo hybrid 69917 on the 1203 from South Woodham. On 25th 33557 replaced 47658 on the 1400 service from Wickford. Other double deckers: 32526 (24th), 33504 (12th), 33545 (21st), 33563 (26th).

Double-deckers on route 100 (Basildon to Lakeside): 33186 (5 March), orange 33414 (12th, 24th), 33424 (16th), 33504 (16th), 33544 (2 March), 33548 (24th), 33551 (26th), 33557 (11th, 21st), 33570 (15th), 33572 (5 March). Also route 100 branded 33412 on most days but this bus has strayed on to other routes: 25 (Sunday 13th), school routes 625 (21st) & 561 (25th). 44909 on 100 on Sunday 27th was very unusual. Double-deckers on route 16: 33424 (12th), 33546 (26th), 33552 (1 March).

The two in service orange Enviro 400s, 33414 & 33415 have operated on various routes, including on two-vehicle school route 561, where they have sometimes been in tandem.

Other Unusual / Interesting workings. 44908 (20th) & 44910 (27th) on 251. HH47521 on school route 822 (1 March). HH63165 on school route 822 (21st). HH69516 on 27 (11th). 69917 on school route 625 (22nd).

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Stephen Barham, Nigel Clark, Jon Collins, Richard Delahoy, David Edwards, John Lidstone, William Morrison, John Podgorski, John Salmon, Derek Stebbing, Chris Stewart, Robert West, First Essex, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

Acquired Vehicles

YT59 RYF/K/M, Scania N230UD / Scania, H41/22D, new to London Sovereign, SP83-85.

Ex RATP Group (London Sovereign). They are awaiting single door conversion and repaint; fleet numbers to be advised in due course.

Renumbering & Disposals

The ex-New Horizon double deckers (as listed in EBM 693) have been numbered 708-14 in order of date of registration, but the last four numerically have already been sold (all are Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Geminis):

BX04 AZW (nominally 711) to Axe Valley Mini Travel, Seaton, Devon.

BX04 BBJ (712) to A C Williams, Grantham. This vehicle is illustrated on the following two pages.

BX54 DJZ (nominally 713) and BX55 XLW (nominally 714) to Lodge's, High Easter.

Allocations

Buses at the former Horizon base at Frating are part of the Boreham depot allocation and will be rotated between the two locations along with exiting Stephenson's vehicles, so we do not plan to regularly report such moves. This means that Horizon-liveried buses may be seen on Boreham depot work, for example SFZ 818 (709) was noted on schools there on 31 January and the following day.

Heritage Fleet

The restoration of former Eastern National and Thamesway Bristol VR XHK 234X (3129) continues (its acquisition was reported in our May 2019 issue).

Storm Eunice

See also page 4. All services were suspended for part of the afternoon on Friday 18 February.

Uttlesford Service Consultation

For a number of years now, Stephenson's have operated the majority of the Essex CC contracts in the Uttlesford area from their depot at Haverhill, with tender awards on various dates - 59 (Audley End to Haverhill) in July 2011, 5/6 (Bishops Stortford - Stansted - Saffron Walden) and 313/A (Saffron Walden to Gt Dunmow) both in September 2013, 18 (now 60, Audley End to Haverhill) in April 2015 and the 301 (Bishops Stortford to Saffron Walden) in March 2016. Those contracts will expire later this year and ECC have launched a consultation on planned enhancements, including extending the hours of operation (and increasing frequencies in some cases), renumbering certain services and introducing new routes. If the plans are adopted - and can be funded - then the changes would comprise:

5 - renumbered 305, extended operating day, other minor timetable changes

6 - renumbered 316, extended operating day, other minor timetable changes; journeys via Saffron Walden High School to be numbered 318

301 - extended operating day, other minor timetable changes, diversion within Saffron Walden; journeys via Saffron Walden High School NOT to be renumbered

313/A - dramatically increased, from 3 times daily to hourly; some trips numbered 314; diverted within Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden 59/60 - renumbered 319/20/21, increased timetable, extended operating day

New - 322/3/4 - these seemingly brand new services would provide a combined hourly service from Bishop's Stortford via Takeley to Great Dunmow, providing a cross-town service there, with buses continuing every two hours to Stebbing (and a limited Tuesday only service to Lindsell).

These ambitious proposals all apply Monday to Saturday, however there is no provision for Sunday journeys. It remains to be seen how these plans are amended in the light of consultation responses and whether funding is available, then of course, which operator(s) win the resulting tenders.

With thanks to the companies, Terry Torch, John Podgorski, Essex County Council website.

Next page top: Stephenson's Scania OmniCity 506 (YN07 LHD) in Colchester Road, Lawford, on the morning of 8 February 2022, returning to Frating depot after working the former New Horizon Travel school service M1, 0730 Alresford - Manningtree High School.

Next page bottom: New Horizon Travel used to allocate BX04 BBJ, Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini to the M1 on a regular basis. Also in Colchester Road, Lawford, on 22 September 2020, again after working M1. Both **Robert Appleton**.





Above: The new order at Frating: following Stephensons takeover of the New Horizon school bus operations from Frating, Scania double-deckers 510 (YN08 OAM) and 503 (EU59 BHX) are seen there, flanking ex-Horizon Volvo BX04 BBJ (as seen on the opposite page, but now with fleet number 712, above the offside lights), with another Volvo partially visible on the left, on 17 February 2022. 712 was sold on 4 March. **John Podgorski**

Below: Use of smaller single deck buses on the Greater Anglia Shenfield to Newbury Park rail replacement is relatively unusual but both 401/2 (both Euro VI) from the NBS fleet were in use on 12/13 February 2022. On the former date, 401 (YX16 OBP) lays over in the car park at Newbury Park station. **Matthew Evans**



Significant Allocations

513	KN - HD	by 30 January
514	HD - KN	by 30 January
523	CN - KN	by 12 February

Withdrawn Vehicles

575	W516 WGH has been scrapped during January 2022 from Kelvedon.
579	W526 WGH withdrawn at CN failed sometime late 2021 or very early 2022.
580	W527 WGH still withdrawn at CN withdrawn gearbox failure December 2021.

Fleet News

Enviro 400 640, LX56 EUC, has been repainted and was seen going through the engineering workshop post paint but does not seem to have been used in service as of late February. 514, LB02 YXF, had joined Kelvedon along with twin 510, LB02 YWX, in lieu of the President numbers dwindling further. 514 was working the 91/95 interworking on Friday 25 February having replaced 513 earlier in the month. Enviro 200s 296 and 298 were replaced by 283 and 294 at Kelvedon by 6 February. President 584 is currently off the road at CN leaving 565/573/586/7/8 in service plus open topper 500 in store.

Storm Eunice

On Friday 18 February many services were suspended due to Storm Eunice. All Chambers services were suspended, and Hedingham advertised suspensions to services 15, 63, 82, 83, 88, 89, 91, 92 and 95. All Hedingham services in Clacton were suspended from 1145 onwards. Services D1 and D2 were unable to serve Cold Norton and Purleigh due to fallen trees.

With thanks to Robert Appleton, John Podgorski & the Hedingham website.

Below: Hedingham 267 (AJ58 PZS) departs Great Bentley for Colchester on route 77A on 17 February 2022. **John Podgorski**





Congratulations!

Congratulations to all at Ensignbus on celebrating the company's 50th anniversary on 23 February 2022.

Dealer Stock Movements February 2022

Vehicles In

From **Arriva London** : Volvo B9TLs BN61 MXI/M/R/T/U/W/X/Y/MYA, BG61 SXK

From **First Essex**: Volvo B7TLs WU02 KVE/H, YN53 EOK, AU53HJN/O/C - fleet numbers 30564/7, 31785, 32477/8/85. Also see below and page 13.

From **First PMT** : Scania YN05 HCO

From **Go Ahead London**: Enviro 200s SK07 DZN, LX09 AYP

From **RATP London**: Scania YT09 ZCL, YT59 RXR/RYP/C/N/O/SFK/U/V/X/SGO/U

Vehicles Out

Acklam's Coaches, Beverley, East Yorkshire: Volvo B9TLs SN09 CVC, SN59 BGX

Ambassador Travel, Great Yarmouth: Volvo B7RLE GN07 AVF

Applegates, Stroud: Volvo B9TLs SN09 CVE/G/I, SN59 BFP

Archway, Fleetwood: Volvo B9TLs SN59 BHA/BGV/BGF, SN09 CVD

Candy Coaches, Slough: Mercedes Cheetah KX60 DWF

Flexit, Leeds: Olympian S265 Y00

Hammonds Coaches, Nottingham: Volvo B9TLs SN09 CVH/CUX

Jans Coaches, Soham Cambridgeshire: Volvo B7TL LK53 LZB

Lee Hitchcock, South Ockendon, Essex: Mercedes Cheetah KX60 DWK

Mantra Logistics, Leicester: Volvo B7TL KP51 VZT

St Matthews School, Surbiton: Volvo B7TL LF52 ZNK

Sleaford Coaches, Sleaford, Lincolnshire: Volvo B9TL SN59 BGZ

Stephen Wilkinson, Weymouth: Volvo B7TL W815 PAE

Tiger Feet Playbus, Larne NI: Volvo B7TL LK53 LYY/LYR/LYZ/LZH

Trainfor Group, Canterbury: Enviro 200s LX09 AYI/AZG

Wattsway Travel, Sutton, Surrey: Volvo B9TL LK59 CWT

To Shelton Motors for scrap

Volvo B7TLs WU02 KVE/H, YN53 EOK,
AU53 HJN/O/C, DAF SB120 YJ07 JTX,
Dart LJ05 GPF.

Ensignbus Fleet

792 LJ56 ONS sold to RSM Training,

Wickford, Essex.

132 returned to Ensignbus from long term loan to First Eastern Counties during the first half of February.

Right: The Volvo FH4 recovery truck EB20 TOW is probably the most expensive vehicle Ensignbus has ever bought (at an estimated £300,000 or so) - Lead Recovery Driver James Johnson takes very good care of it and is immensely proud of his charge. It's worked hard for two years now, but still looks in mint condition and is a credit to Ensignbus. Here, James arrives at his old depot, First Hadleigh, on 2 March 2022, to assess the situation with Trident 33376 and to recover it to Purfleet (as 33376 was a March acquisition by Ensignbus it is not in the above list, but see page 13). **John G Lidstone**



Ipswich Buses have a second Scania OmniCity single-decker converted into a mobile NHS vaccination centre, in addition to YN56 NVC reported in EBM 690. The latest addition is YN56 NAF, also from Happy Al's Coaches of Birkenhead, although this isn't a former Ipswich bus returning, it was new to Reading Buses in 2006. However, YN56 NVC (originally Ipswich Buses 71) has now been released by the NHS and is being sent to Eastern Europe to act as a mobile blood bank for casualties of the war in Ukraine. In the week commencing 7 March, YN56 NVC will travel from Ipswich to Harwich International Port for the Stena Line ferry to the Hook of Holland, then it will be driven across the Netherlands, Germany and Poland to the Ukrainian border, a journey of some 1,500 miles.

Ipswich Buses also had an ADL Enviro 200 in use as a mobile NHS vaccination centre. As reported in EBN 684 (April 2021), 83 (KX58 GUW) was acquired from Completely Coach Travel, Norwich and was immediately converted. However, it has now been reconverted back to a normal bus, re-seated, refurbished and repainted by Hants & Dorset Trim from white into Ipswich Buses livery, returning to Ipswich on 4 March. As reported in previous EBMs, both YN56 NVC and KX58 GUW were sometimes used by the NHS in North East Essex.

The two Optare Solos, 241 (YN04 LWK) and 245 (YJ05 XNY), continued to work in Essex in February. On most Mondays to Fridays one of them often worked on Colchester services 4 & 11, alongside an Enviro 200, although on 2nd and 4th both Solos were on these routes. A photo of 241 in Clacton taken on 1 February is on page 32. These services do not run on Saturdays, so on Saturdays one Solo worked on Clacton - Mistley 2/A. On Mondays to Fridays 2/A is worked by one of the four short ADL Enviro 200: 70/73 (YX59 BZL/N) 71/72 (LX58 LMO/M).

However, towards the end of February, both Solos were taken out of service, and they no longer appeared on Bustimes. There is a photo on Facebook dated 25 February of 245 at the depot of Lodge Coaches of High Easter, still in Ipswich Buses livery. Another photo on Facebook dated 28 February shows 241 stored out of use at Ipswich Buses' Constantine Road depot in Ipswich.

Ipswich Buses and other operators ran rail replacement services from Colchester to Shenfield and Newbury Park for Greater Anglia on Saturday 12 February due to planned engineering work. Ipswich Buses used Mercedes Citaros 153/4 (BF65 HVT/U).

On 14 February Citaro 154 worked 0720 Thorington Crossroads - Suffolk Rural College RC1 instead of the expected Enviro 200. Also on 14th Ipswich School contract 10 from Holland-on-Sea and the Tendring area had a touch of luxury in the shape of 2 (SGZ 1002) Volvo B11RT / Caetano Levante, instead of the usual Enviro 200 74 (DU60 LOJ).

Friday 18 February and Storm Eunice arrived. Due to this East Bergholt High School was closed for the day. Also 18 February was the first day of the Ipswich School half term holiday. Thus single-deckers were used on services 92/93/A, but Storm Eunice still caused problems:

Ipswich - Manningtree 92: Citaro 153 (BF65 HVT) on the all-day duty and Enviro 200 82 (YX63 LGF) on the last journeys at 1740 ex Ipswich, 1830 ex Manningtree. Holbrook and Stutton could not be served due to fallen trees, so service 92 operated via the A137 between Ipswich and Brantham.

Ipswich - Colchester 93/A: Enviro 200 75 (GD10 MVM) and Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse 162 (SK07 CGO). Fallen trees in East Bergholt meant that buses could not do a complete circuit of the village, only Foxhall Fields, Gaston Street and Lambe School were served.

Clacton - Mistley 2/A: Enviro 200 71, but weather conditions deteriorated on the coast at Clacton so much that 1202 Mistley - Clacton 2A terminated at Little Clacton, and the service was suspended for the rest of the day.

Colchester routes 4 & 11: Enviro 200 72 and 73, no issues reported with these services.

However problems continued:

On 19 February Colchester Road, Manningtree could not be served due to a broken power line hanging in the road, so buses on services 2 and 92 were diverted via Long Road Lawford, New Road Mistley, and the Walls between Mistley and Manningtree.

On 19/21/22 February Little Bromley could not be served due to fallen trees. Clacton - Mistley 2 was diverted after Little Bentley via Horsley Cross, Clacton Road and Long Road, then resuming the normal route in Lawford.

On 19 February part of Holbrook and Stutton could not be served, so service 92 turned round at Holbrook (Compasses) and used the A137 to reach the normal route at Brantham. Service 92 was also delayed by very high tides causing flooding of The Strand at Wherstead.

Due to school half term holidays, services 92/93/A were worked by single-deckers on 21/22/23 February, including Enviro 200s 76 (LX58 LML), 82 (YX63 LGF) & 101 (SN16 OGG), Citaro 153/154, and Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse 160 (SN57 DCX).

With thanks to Stephen Barham, Stuart Ray, Ipswich Transport Society Journal, Ipswich Buses Enthusiast Facebook Group, Ipswich Buses website, Bustimes and Ipswich Star online.

Acquired Vehicles

Further to EBM 693, Scania N94UD / Scania OmniCity YN56 FBX is for the East End Gangster tour.

It is not yet known if this is an additional vehicle for the tour or to replace Dennis Trident / ALX 400 X336 NNO. The latter was seen still in service on 5 March 2022.

Of the other acquired vehicles listed in EBMs 693 & 694, Solos KX57 KFZ, KX58 AYF & MV07 DWM and Enviro 200s LX07 BXV & SN57 DWV have entered service, but Solo KX57 KGF and Enviro 200s LX07 BYA & SN57 DWZ have not.

Repaints

Recently acquired Solos KX57 KFZ and KX58 AYF and Dart / Pointer trainer KP02 PVO are now in fleet livery.

Other Vehicle News

In EBM 689 it was reported that Scania OmniCity double-decker YP59 OEX had collided with StreetLite CC11 BUS in Harlow Bus Station in June last year. The former went to ADL Harlow for frontal rebuild, with the latter going to Mardens for rear end repairs. The StreetLite returned to service last autumn. It is not clear if the OmniCity returned to service or not, there was an unconfirmed report of it also in service last autumn, but no other reports since last October.

With thanks to Allan White, Owen Woodliffe and LOTS.

Below: As reported last month, former Go-Ahead London Enviro 200 SN57 DWV entered service on 4 February still in all over red, but with fleet names and TfL roundel removed, blinds not in use, route number in windscreen. It is seen at the Old Highway area of Hoddesdon on route 410 on 19 February. **Allan White**





Above: Central Connect operate five Optare Tempos that were new to London United, although one, YJ11 EHG, hasn't been reported in service since before last August.. Two are in fleet livery but the other three are still in London red, as illustrated by YJ11 EHH pulling away from the stop at Hoddesdon Clock Tower on 29 January 2022, on service 410, Harlow to Cheshunt (Brookfield Centre). The photographer, **Richard Delahoy**, had just alighted and was waiting for an Arriva 310 as part of a bus pass day out, taking in parts of west Essex and Hertfordshire. His itinerary comprised Arriva 1 to Southend, First Essex X30 to Chelmsford and 32 to Ongar, Central Connect 420 to Harlow and 410 to Hoddesdon, Arriva 310 to Waltham Cross, lunch, Vectare 13A to Epping and 31 to Harlow, Arriva 59 to Chelmsford, First Essex X30 to Southend and Arriva 1 home (via the chippy!). That ambitious plan worked with the aid of two minus connections, one thanks to an early arrival and the second due to a late running X30.

Other Operators

by Roger A Smith

With thanks to Robert Downton, Bus & Coach Week, Route One, and the PSV Circle.

Acme Bus, Widdington

MB04 TCY (ex GK04 JUH) and MB04 TCZ (ex MX04 TFU), both MAN18.310s with Marco Polo C53F bodies, have gone from here.

Ford, Althorne

Gone from here is YT13 HLF, an Irizar C36FT bodied Scania K360EB.

Kinect, Rayleigh

An additional operating centre is given as Mucking Hall Farm, Mucking Hall Lane, Barling Magna, SS3 ONL.

Trekkers, Latton Common

A change of operating centre is given as Horseshoe Farm, London Road, Latton, CM17 9LH.

John James Luxury Travel, Romford

This company has been purchased by turnaround investment company REL Capital. Existing Directors will remain in place and retain a share of the business. It will operate alongside an earlier (September 2020) REL purchase, Davian Coaches (now REL Davian), which has recently invested £1.5m in 13 new coaches to operate from its Tottenham depot and won 12 new contracts over the past year.

Opposite top: John James Travel Mercedes WEB6324 / Mercedes Turismo C49Ft BX64 WHT at Russell Square, London on 23 December 2019 in Coach Direct Holidays Branding. Ex Belle Vue Coaches Manchester, new 2014. **Robert Downton**



Lodge Coaches, High Easter

This company has acquired a rare Bedford. The MLC bus, registration FIT 86, was new to Dorset County Council Education Committee in 1952 before spending many years with Bill Whittaker of Whittaker's Coaches of West Bromwich. Lodge's bought the vehicle from the executors of Keith Allis-Barber following his death last year. It is currently being restored, before a decision is taken as to whether Lodges will keep it or pass it on. Lodge's already has a dozen-strong heritage fleet.

As reported above, ex New Horizon Travel BX54 DJZ and BX55 XLW have been acquired from Stephenson's.

As also reported above, there is a photo on Facebook dated 25 February of Ipswich Buses Optare Solo 245 at Lodge's depot.

Below: Lodge's former Blackpool Transport Dennis Trident / East Lancs PJ03 TFV at Pleshey on 2 February 2022 in a livery for a New Hall School contract. Details of this are available at [New_Hall_Shuttle_Service_with_map_2.pdf](#) ([vectare.co.uk](#)). **David Arnold**



There was an interesting piece on decimalisation at Eastern National in EBN 683, thanks for this. Just for the record, Bishop's Stortford should be included in the list of depots visited by one of the open-toppers fitted out as decimal-training units, as I remember it well. Might even have been there over a couple of days, as it would have been administratively very difficult to fit in training every conductor and OMO driver (OMO rather than OPO because EN had yet at that time to employ any women drivers) in during just one day, mixed in with operating the normal schedules. I should imagine every depot would have had to have been visited, although it's possible that Walton's staff might have done theirs at Clacton and maybe Canvey staff at Hadleigh.

As far as conversion of the machines was concerned, the numerical counters did not have to be changed because the amount of cash taken was calculated on the waybill, not the ticket machine, as hereunder.

Firstly, £/s/d

There were small windows on the machine that showed (a) the number of tickets issued so far, (b) the number of shillings on tickets so far, and (c) the number of half-pennies on tickets so far. At the start of each shift or working day the conductor would record on the appropriate box on the waybill the numbers shown in each window, and at the end of the day would record, in the box above, the numbers then showing in the windows. The bottom numbers would then be subtracted from the top numbers to show how many tickets had been issued, how many shillings had been rung up and how many ha'pennies had been rung up [see David Harman's comments below]. Now if I had saved a waybill, I've certainly lost it now, so I can't just scan one in to show the above. However, an example would be something like this:

SHILLINGS finish number 12347

start number 12245

so total shillings 102 equating to £5/2/- (five pounds and two shillings).

HALFPENNIES finish number 67890

start number 67450

so total halfpennies 440 equating to 18/4 (eighteen shillings and fourpence).

So amount to be paid in (£5/2/- plus 18/4); £6/-/4 (six pounds no shillings and fourpence).

The conversion into pounds and shillings of the number of shillings shown was simple; with twenty shillings to the pound, just divide by twenty. But with the total of halfpennies shown first having to be halved to give the number of whole pennies and then having to convert that into pounds, shillings and pence, this was less than straightforward. (Twelve pennies = one shilling, twenty shillings = one pound). Therefore, Setright produced a 'Half-Penny Ready Reckoner' booklet, which was available in the conductors' room. I attach a copy of one (sorry it's a bit tatty!).

Secondly, decimal (100p = £1)

The inner dial now became the number of tens to be shown on each ticket, and the outer dial now became the number of halfpences to be shown on each ticket. So a fare, say, of 18p would turn the number on in what was now the tens (formerly the shillings) window by one and the what was now the halfpences (formerly the old ha'pennies) window by 16. At the end of the day a sample waybill reading and calculation might be like this;

TENS finish number 45678

start number 45600

so total tens of pences 78 equating to £7.80 (seven pounds eighty pence).

HALFPENCES finish number 23856

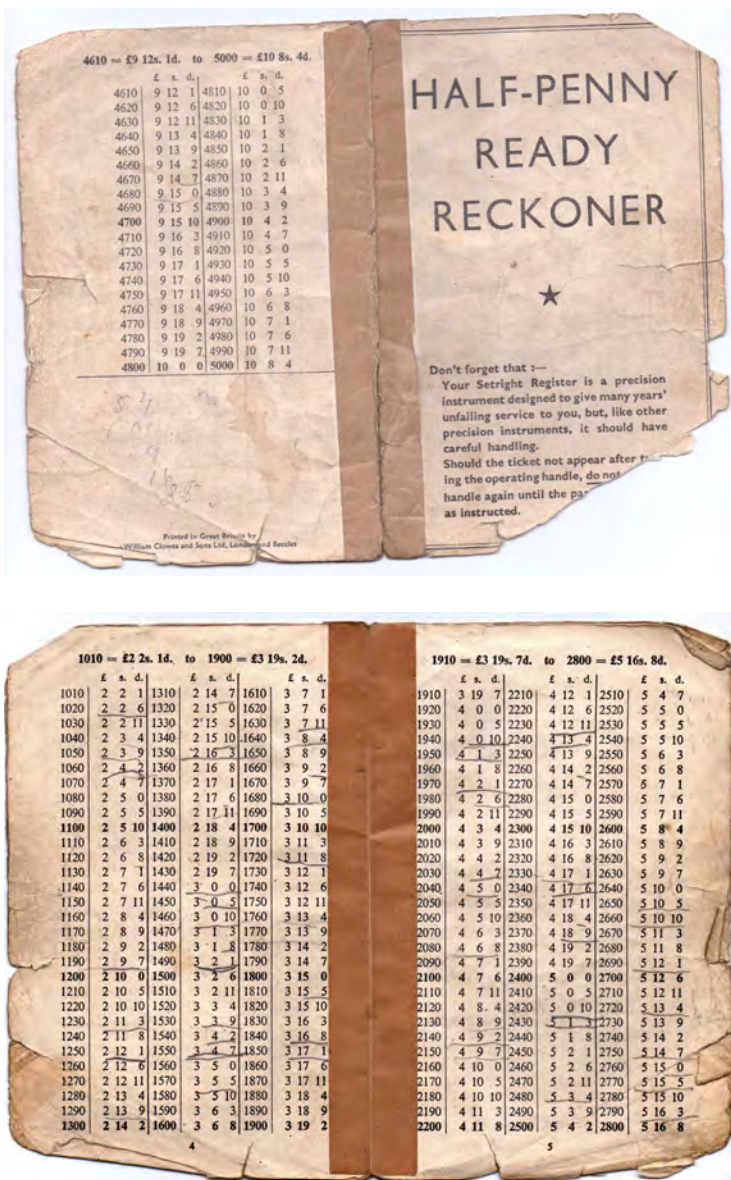
start number 23368

so total halfpences 488 equating to £2.44 (two pounds and forty-four pence).

So amount to be paid in (£7.80 plus £2.44); £10.24 (ten pounds and twenty-four pence).

With the calculations being so much simpler there was no need for a decimal half-pences ready reckoner (at least, I can't remember ever seeing one).

It can be seen that with no halfpence fares in either £/s/d or decimal fares, any end total of halfpences that showed an uneven number could only mean that at least one ticket had incorrectly had a halfpence shown and recorded (the dial showed 1, 1½, 2, 2½, 3, 3½ and so on). So if that happened you had to add on one unit to the total halfpences shown on the waybill. We had one conductor at Bishop's Stortford whose failing eyesight meant that he frequently failed to notice that he had turned the dial on the outer wheel to wrongly show the intended pence plus the ½, thus resulting that he usually had less takings to pay in than that which was shown on the waybill and had to make up the difference out of his own pocket. Eventually the differences increased to the point when he had to admit his problem; he eventually had to take ill-health retirement when his eyesight became too bad for him to continue. Although we had none at Bishop's Stortford, I was told that at much larger depots there was the odd conductor or conductress who actually left the job because of being unable to get to grips with the decimal system. Seems hard to believe, but after many years with £/s/d many people initially found decimal currency very hard to deal with.



During the year that I was conducting under the old £/s/d system there were coins in circulation that could be anything up to 100 years old. I bought a little booklet that showed coins of all dates that were rarer and thus worth more than face value. During that year I religiously looked at the dates on every coin I took, and if they were worth more than face value, I took them out and at the end of the day replaced them with coins from my own pocket. For many years after, when money was tight (which on EN's pay for conductors was pretty much all of the time!) I would sell off some of my stash to coin dealers. I still have some; anyone want a bag of 100 Scottish 1961 shillings?!!!

David Harman adds the following regarding the physical conversion necessary to Setright machines, referred to in EBN 683.

Decimalisation day generally was 15 February 1971, but British Rail and London Transport converted on 14 February 1971 whilst NBC and many other bus companies converted on 21 February 1971.

Eastern National Setrights were delivered in batches from about 1948 onwards. All were of the long-range type, with a maximum fare of 19s 11½d. There were two specifications, an earlier one and a later one. Ex-Westcliff MS and Hicks Bros machines each had different specifications.

Index wheels:

- Shillings (0-19) were selected by rotating the inner index wheel anti-clockwise.
- Pence (0-11½ in ½d increments) were selected by rotating the outer index wheel clockwise.
[see photo (2) below]

On tickets there were two typebars reading SHILLINGS and PENCE.

Fares were thus shown:

- *(SHILLINGS) 2 (PENCE) for a 2d fare
- *(SHILLINGS) 6D (PENCE) for a 6d fare
- *(SHILLINGS) 11 (PENCE) for an 11d fare [see ticket photo 1(a) below]
- 1 (SHILLINGS) * (PENCE) for a 1/-d fare
- 6S (SHILLINGS) 9D (PENCE) for a 6/9d fare

Note, the 6d and 9d, 6s and 9s fare values (only) were shown with suffix "D" or "S", to avoid any confusion between 6 and 9 on the part of the passenger.

Cash counters - early EN, all WMS and Hicks machines:

- halfpence counter on front of machine, counting fares selected by the pence index wheel
- shillings counter on rear of machine, counting fares selected by the shillings index wheel

Cash Counters - later EN machines

- "sterling" counter (£sd) on front of machine, counting fares selected by the pence index wheel
- "sterling" counter (£s) on rear of machine, counting fares selected by the shillings index wheel

Halfpennies

When the machines were new, halfpennies were in common use and EN had odd-halfpenny fares. It must be remembered that pre-deregulation, fares had to be approved by the Traffic Commissioners and whilst odd halfpenny fares were awkward, the TCs would not always permit fares increases to eliminate them. Conversely, the TCs sometimes would not approve round-pence increases, allowing only a half-penny increase, in some cases causing halfpenny fares to be reintroduced.

Halfpenny fares generally disappeared from EN sometime in the late-1950s / early 1960s but there may have been residual halfpenny fares in border areas where other operators had retained them.

Decimalisation

For decimalisation, Setright Registers Ltd offered a 'decimal-ready' conversion kit. From c.1969, new Setrights incorporated these kits. However, EN did not buy these kits or any new machines. Instead, a 'home-made' conversion was done. A few other major operators (Southdown, LCBS and Southend CTD) also did this.

This work began some time before D-day. It comprised dismantling the machine, removing the SHILLINGS typebar and reassembling the machine.

Fares were then shown:

- * (space) 2 (PENCE) for a 2d fare
- * (space) 6D (PENCE) for a 6d fare
- * (space) 10 (PENCE) for a 10d fare [see photo 1(b) below]
- 1 (space) * (PENCE) for a 1/-d fare
- 6S (space) 9D (PENCE) for a 6/9d fare

Just prior to D-day, the machines were further modified:

- Hole drilled in 10d position of pence index wheel and 'stop' inserted to prevent fares above 9½p being selected [see photo (3) below]
- Machines with £sd / £s counters replaced with new halfpence and 10p counters
- Plates reading "½p UNITS" and "10p UNITS" fitted above counters

Given the large numbers of machines that had to be dealt with in a short period of time, older machines that were in store were modified for decimal operation and supplied to depots ready for D-day. Newer machines were subsequently modified and gradually filtered back into service.

Fares were then shown:

- (space) 2 (PENCE) for a 2p fare
- (space) 6D (PENCE) for a 6p fare
- 1 (space) 1 (PENCE) for an 11p fare [see photo 1[c] below]
- 6S (space) 9D (PENCE) for a 69p fare

Subsequently, two further modifications were made on a gradual basis:

- The 6D/9D and 6S/9S positions on the print wheels had the "D" and "S" ground-off
- Some machines had new pence print wheels of a revised pattern fitted. These printed 0- to 9½

It is not thought EN had any odd ½p fares after D-Day.

Finally, David has added a couple of comments on Peter's notes above:

(1) cash counters - BS may have only had Setright's with halfpenny / shillings counters as it was a small depot. Most depots had some with the sterling (£sd) counters. About a third of the machines had £sd counters.

(2) halfpenny ready-reckoner - this was printed:

(a) in the bound EN fare table books (until they were replaced by loose cards from about 1964 or so)

(b) on waybills. In 1968/69, these were large sheets. Later ones were smaller and without the ready-reckoner if I recall.

I think they were also in the little green "PSV Diaries" sold by the union rep. Most platform staff had these to record their duties, paid hours etc.



Photo 1 (supplied by Chris Stewart). Three Setright tickets:

(a) pre-decimal showing '0' (star) shillings and 11 pence

(b) interim modification with 'shillings' bar removed but still able to display up to 12 (old) pence, and

(c) modified for decimal currency with 'shillings' bar removed - 'pence' wheel would also have been stopped at 9.



As an aside, the reverse of the Setright tickets featured here carried some of the dozens of adverts found throughout the 1960s and 1970s - in the case of these, Percy Dalton's Famous Peanuts, Lunn-Poly Holidays and the Southend Historic Aircraft Museum. Maybe we'll visit that topic at some future date! In the meantime a couple of examples at the top of next page.



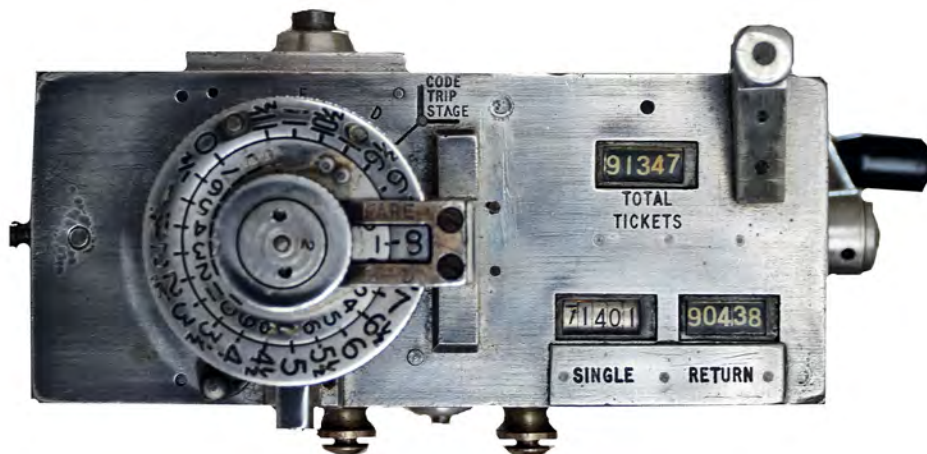


Below **Photo 2**: Pre-Decimal Eastern National machine.

Bottom **Photo 3**: Eastern National machine modified with an extra stop on the outer ring.

Photos of ticket machines **David Harman**.

With thanks to Chris Stewart.



Gibson Ticket Machines

The Setrights used by Eastern National as illustrated on the previous page will be the most recognisable type of ticket machine to readers of a certain age from Essex, but for many the Gibson ticket machines used by London Transport come a close second. A Capital Transport book, "Mr. Gibson's Ticket Machine: The Complete Story 1944-1993" by Anthony Cross was published last December and is a fascinating read.

Gibson machines have continued to be used within Essex by London Bus Company on routes associated with the Epping & Ongar Railway, most notably the 339 from Epping to North Weald / Shenfield (this route was featured in last month's magazine). However, their use has now come to an end on the regular services following Government legislation for the Bus Open Data Service that requires operators of registered local services to make available live tracking data (refreshed at least every 30 seconds), which is normally provided by ticket machines. The Gibsons were celebrated in a last day event at the EOR on 20 February 2022, as illustrated on this page by **Richard Delahoy**. They may continue to be used on services on running days.



Above: Group member Paul Robinson on the platform of RM298.
Left: this machine was in use at the gate for pedestrian entrants.
Below: SM1 at Theydon Bois with another conductor with a Gibson.



Rear Cover: First Essex Eastern National Liveried Volvo / Geminis

Top: On 14 February 2022 services to Canvey Island were curtailed at Benfleet for several hours due to gridlock on the island. B9TL / Eclipse Gemini 2 37986, in ENOC 1968 FLF coach livery, is in London Road, Leigh on route 27 showing the short working, a display rarely seen. Coincidentally, Eastern National passing Southend Corporation Transport (6499). **John G Lidstone**

Bottom: EN in the new Braintree Interchange. B7TL / Eclipse Gemini 37007, in 1990s Badgerline style livery, on route 70 in winter sunshine on 11 February 2022. **David Moth.** Compare this photo with the one of this bus in the rain on the rear cover of EBN 679.

Right: A very apt display seeing that Ipswich Buses' two Solos have now been withdrawn, see page 22. Photographer **Alan Moore** writes: "I was in Clacton on 1 February when an engineer turned up with Optare Solo 241 (YN04 LWK) as Enviro 200 71 (LX 58 LMO) was having a problem. I don't know if the buses were swapped as I had to carry on with my shopping!"

Below: Halstead High Street on page 1 and Halstead High Street on page 32. No longer a sign of the times: Hedingham Alexander Dennis Dart / Pointer 259 (EU56 FLP) still 'wearing' its 'Covid mask' on 12 February 2022. **David Moth**



695 for EBM 695

This month the same vehicle in both photos, but with different owners.

Below: Leyland National PEV 695R in Liverpool on 1 February 1999, operating for CMT Buses. By this time the bus was over 22 years old, having been new to Eastern National as 1783 in October 1976.



Below: in contrast, 1783 when less than a year old, at Harwich in August 1977. Compared to 1782 illustrated last month, 1783 has the original white double N signs by the fleet name and the original L (for Leyland) badge on the front. By this time, the side and rear white band had been extended to the front. Both **Robert Appleton**





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