

ESSEX BUS NEWS

DECEMBER 1991

The monthly magazine of the ESSEX BUS ENTHUSIASTS GROUP

(Formerly the Eastern National Enthusiasts Group)

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This months magazine includes the continuation of the FLF story. A number of FLFs were fitted for OMO and one of them 2942 (AVW 401F) is seen in Colchester. A number of the alterations are visible including revised bulkhead, OMO signs and upper deck periscope.

(W T Cansick)

On behalf of the committee may I wish all members and contributors to the magazine a very happy Christmas and best wishes for 1992.

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SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

To prevent a repeat of the problems that occurred earlier in the year, any members who have not yet renewed their membership for 1992 and wish to do so, are reminded to post their application as soon as possible.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I understand that one of your correspondents recently requested information on any preserved ex Colchester BT vehicles.

I acquired 24 (Bristol RELL6L SWC 24K) in August 1990 from G&G Travel of Leamington Spa, to whom it had been sold in 1987 after 15 years service.

Mr Clive Sampson and all the engineering staff at Magdalen Street were very helpful when I made enquiries about the history of the vehicle, and donated many spares, including body parts from 15 - from which I would assume that this vehicle was probably scrapped.

Work on restoring the vehicle to CBT livery started in September 1990, when I removed all the lower bodywork panels and trim. Nearly all were scuffed/dented, with the G & G paintwork suffering from poor adhesion to the original maroon/cream. New aluminium panels have now been fitted and I hope to have the vehicle ready for repainting in the spring of next year. The vehicle is mechanically sound, but I would like to replace the leaf springs when funds permit.

The vehicle is based at the Birmingham & Midland Museum of Transport, Wythall during the rally season. I am at present working away from the UK and hence 24 is stored under cover for the duration.

In September, I contacted Busways who received other REs from CBT; they advised me that they had just carried out major refurbishment on these vehicles and anticipated several more years service from them.

Guy Stanbury

EASTERN NATIONAL

General

With effect from 19.1.91. both Braintree and Bishops Stortford depots will be reduced to outstations. The Braintree allocation will be reduced to minibuses for Town Services which will be maintained at Maldon. Bishops Stortford will retain both big buses and minibuses and will be an outstation of Chelmsford. Dunmow will obtain some extra vehicles to cover services 132/3 and will remain an outstation of Chelmsford. The present network of services will remain unchanged except for some minor timetable revisions, although Bishops Stortford commuter service 712 will be withdrawn. The Coach unit will disappear, with the Leopards being withdrawn and the Tiger/Plaxtons will cover the remaining commuter work together with 4510-2. The main object of the changes is to reduce costs and about 30 jobs will be lost. Maldon Braintree and Bishops Stortford will be controlled by one local

Operating Manager from Maldon. Braintree will move from the North Essex to Central Essex division. It is also reported that the company are looking for new "Green Field" sites for Braintree and Bishops Stortford outstations. The long awaited Coopers End link road opened on Friday 15th November and allows services direct access from Takeley to Stansted Airport. The opening featured in a number of local papers with BS 1940 becoming the first vehicle to use it.

Unusual Workings

30.10.91. CF 1834 on service 53 (CR operated)
1.11.91. DT 1123 on service 53X (CR operated)
MN 1425 on service 92 (First reported Lynx)
3.11.91. Further to last month service 53A should be worked by Colchester but evening journeys were being operated by CF Lynxes.
16.11.91. CR 4004 on Service 53. (CR have now operated everything except a VR since the service was revised)
19.11.91. CN 0219 on Witham minibus services.

HEDINGHAM

Vehicles

AEC Reliance L181 (229 LRB) has been reregistered GPV 211T and is often used for driver training along with the AEC Renown L179. Bedford YNT L116 (HAR 116Y) suffered severe front end damage in an accident at Marks Tey on 7.11.91.

Services

Revised timetables were introduced on service 90/A from 2.12.91. and will be introduced on 80/84/84A from 6.1.92.

OTHER OPERATORS

A number of the following notes have been obtained as a result of the editor updating his records from those published by the PSV Circle and hence may have occurred some while ago. If you are aware of any news from independent operators in the County please let the sub editors know.

APT RAYLEIGH 827 APT is now on a Scania 112/Berkhof thought to be former Ebdons C591 KTW which was on the premises in September. ASSOCIATED COACHWAYS Have registered a Fridays only service between High Wych and Harlow numbered 347.

BJS GT WAKERING Have sold Mercedes minicoach B923 BGA.

BOON BOREHAM Bedford YNV/Duple F755 JAY was sold in April.

BRANDON BLACKMORE END A Bova Futura A398 VML seating C49FT has been acquired.

CARTERS Are reported to have acquired EKJ 441K a Leopard with Marshall B52F bodywork.

CHANNEL COACHWAYS Noted during November was J215 XKY a Scania 93

with Duple 320 bodywork.

CHARTERCOACH Have acquired GTM 123T a Bedford VAS/Plaxton C29F.

CLINTONA A further Transit to report is G731 PGA.

CROWN THUNDERSLEY Have sold BFX 747T a Bedford/Plaxton.

CUNNINGHAM Have acquired a Setra 572 XAE seating C49FT this was new as KEU 572X.

DONS DUNMOW Dennis B135 AAV has been reregistered TXI 8756.

Acquired is D137 HML a Tiger/Duple C50FT ex Limebourne which has been reregistered TXI 8755.

ESSEX THAMESIDE The Benfleet circular (EBN 331 refers) operates via High Road, Kents Hill Road, London Road and Manor Road.

FARGO RAYNE A further Volvo/Jonckhree is A338 YDT.

FORDS ALTHORNE Have sold Atlantean JSC 886E.

FUNSTON CHRISHALL Acquired JTV 639N a Bedford YRT/Plaxton C51F from Brown, Saffron Walden earlier in the year.

GOODWIN BLACK NOTLEY A Volvo/Berkhof C49FT 840 FAY has been acquired from Viking Bland, Corringham.

HALLS BRAINTREE Are reported to have acquired HBW 874N a Bedford YRT/Duple and RVU 539R an AEC Reliance/Plaxton.

HARRIS To correct EBN 331/9 the service 385 was introduced to cover trains withdrawn from Rainham and Purfleet stations, the Tilbury loop trains run via Grays, Ockendon and Upminster where the 385 connects.

ISLAND COACHES CANVEY Have sold VW minibus EFX 737V.

KINGS STANWAY Have acquired E279 HRY a Bova Futura from Wiffen, Finchfield.

LODGE HIGH EASTER Have acquired Duple 425 C294 HRN and FEW 244V a Bedford YMT/Duple.

NELSONS To correct EBN 326/9 and 328/12 the former Southern Vectis VR is registered NDL 652R. The former GM Buses Dodge is now in fleet livery.

OSBORNE Bedford RTW 148R has been sold.

RIDGEON STANFORD LE HOPE Have acquired TND 103X a Ford R1114 with Duple C53F from C&M Cars.

RONDA SOUTHEND Have sold Leopard NUR 82P.

S&P COACHES SOUTHEND Have sold Bedford NMJ 391P but have acquired Leopard/Plaxton LWV 271P which was new to Southdown.

SIMIEN To correct EBN 331 the Sherpa is D208 NON.

STANS GT TOTHAM Have acquired HAH 22Y a Bova.

STEPHENSONS Bristol RE LHT 166L has been returned following its loan to Tame Valley, Birmingham and is now for sale. Bristol VR TBW 452P is now in Stephensons livery ex South Midland Orbiter. Asda livered JWW 255N is due for repaint into fleet livery but is expected to retain ASDA lettering. Christmas services (under the Town Lynx banner) will see Sat. 21 extra service on 6 between Eastwood and Southchurch; Mon 23 additional ASDA contract (normally no service on a Monday); Wed 1 Jan special service 7B between Rochford and Southend (positioning journeys), 20 Hullbridge to Southend (hourly), and 3B Hadleigh to Southchurch (half hourly evening only, with one journey from Rayleigh). Please note there will be no service on Boxing Day this year. Santa will be employed by Town Lynx on 21, 23 and 24th December!

SUPREME HADLEIGH Are using a ?/Plaxton MRP 840Y (a dealer loan?). Volvo/Berkhof NSU 512 (ex KNO 221Y) has been sold.

VENTURER ROCHFORD Acquired is B533 GNV a MAN SR280.

VICEROY Have acquired B123 ECS a Scania/Plaxton C49FT.
WEBB HIGHWOOD Bedford YMT HOO 1N was destroyed by fire some months ago.
WINDMILL COPFORD Have sold Bova B559 KRY.

NON PSV OPERATORS

FORD MOTOR COMPANY It is thought that Sanos/Ensign Charisma F100 THK was involved in an accident in late September. Bova Futura LIW 4078 was on loan from Airport Coaches between at least 2.10.91. and 24.10.91. with an anonymous Bedford/Plaxton C503 JCY in use from 28.10.91. The Sanos was back in use by mid November.

Former Midland Red Ford R192/Plaxton YHA 341J is in use as a cafe between Halstead and Earls Colne on the A604.



Bristol MW 1339 (2729 VX) brings back memories in more than way way, seen here at Silver End garage

(P Snell)

SOUTHEND TRANSPORT NEWS

VEHICLES

800 G837LWR OPTARE DELTA (DAF SB230 Running Units) Demonstrator was used in service from 5/11 to 12/11. Featured the same silver & blue livery as the Vecta demonstrator. This bus was noted on services 3,4A, 13 & 404 and also did a rounder on the X1 to Heathrow. Further to the item on the Vecta last month, it was also noted on the 12.

118. This RM has received an engine change from Leyland to AEC as per earlier conversions on 114/7. Only 113/6 remain with Leyland units.

235. Converted to LH49/33F and semi-auto gears as per 238. Also given a repaint (11/91).

708, 711/2, 715. These four Nationals converted from B44F to B41F with luggage pen.

111/2. To correct last months notes, the offside advert panels have not been removed or filled in.

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSALS

203/4 UTD203/4T. Rebodyed with Willowbrook Warrior B48F and reregistered PIB 5144/5 in the Lewes Coach fleet.

MEMBERS OBSERVATIONS

A surplus of 2 person crews has seen RMs covering OPO workings, noted were the 4A on Sats 16 & 23 Nov and the 3 on Sat 23/11.

ROUTE CHANGES

All change on the 4s. As from 08/12 the 4 will revert to its old stamping ground of Landwick to Southend(Central Bus Station) to meet public requests. The new timetable features a joint(with 4A) 20min headway Mon-Fri peak hr service Wakering-Southend. The erstwhile section from Vic Circus to Highlands is taken over by a much revised service 5. Now running from Temple Sutton(Rusty Bucket) via Hamstel Rd, Southchurch(White Horse), Southend, London Rd, Leigh Church. Mon-Fri off peak services go as the old 4 to Highlands with peak jnys via (5A) Leigh Stn Still Canvey-Southend Suns & Evenings. Features 20min Sat daytime service using RMs. New leaflets available dated 8/12.

FURTHER ROUTEMASTERS ACQUIRED

The best news until last! A nice Christmas present for all RM fans. Yes ST have acquired three further examples. Fleet numbers have not been allocated neither is the likely use of these vehicles known but we will keep you posted. All three are runners.

VLT44	(RM44)	AEC Routemaster	in LT red (Leyland engine)
CUV162C	(RM2162)	" "	in GM buses RM livery
BMJ919A	(RM908)	" "	in United Counties RM green.

If the Sub-ed is allowed a little seasonal speculation these three

RMs would do nicely on an extended service 2 to Grays (Original route of course) or perhaps a 151/251 to Wood Green.

I would like to wish all readers and contributors a Happy Christmas and prosperous '92 with a special thankyou to ST for their continued, highly valued support to the group.

Thamesway Ltd

These notes are correct to November 23rd

Allocations

Late Oct 236-43 BD-BN 1797 BN-D/L(D) 1818 HH-D/L(D) 1838 HH-D/L(D)
 1848 BD-D/L(D) 1853 BN-Pool 1854 BN-BD 1878 BN-HH 1880 BN-HH

Repaints

Noted repainted in new livery are 1849 and 1912.

Disposals

1818/38/48 are now with Sovereign Bus and Coach Company.

Service Revisions

37/A Commencing 25th November service rerouted to serve the Chafford Hundred development and no longer serves Sockets Heath. Minor timetable changes.

To confirm from 23rd November routes W11 & W12 will be taken over from London Forest, W13 is retained but W14 is lost to County Bus, overall the vehicle requirement is the same. Thamesway commenced operation of Basildons Park and Ride from Saturday 16th November until Saturday 28th December, Saturdays only operated by BN & HH staff using BN Leyland Nationals.

Publicity

37/37A dated 25-11-91

General

Further to last months comments about travelling on services 37/A between Grays area and Pitsea Tesco when one wants to return home change of bus is necessary at Basildon Bus Station. When travelling one has to ask for a Transfer Return ticket?

Olympian 4010 has lost its computer destination equipment in favour of standard blinds. The pool Olympians (4009-11) appear to be used in service from BD on services 251 & 551.

Usually Workings

6-11-91 BN 1893 on service 250
11-11-91 Pool 4010 on service 225
13-11-91 BD 394 on Brentwood Town services
14-11-91 BD 390 on Brentwood town services
15-11-91 HH 359 on service 11
19-11-91 Pool 1788 on service 152
21-11-91 Pool 4010 on service 251

THE FLF STORY

This feature which traces the history of the Bristol FLF with Eastern National continues below. Previous articles have appeared in EBN during June 90, Aug 90, Oct 90, Feb 91 and Jun 91. If you require a photocopy of any part please write to the editor enclosing a SAE.

PART 4 COACHES (Continued)

9600-14 were officially returned to Eastern National on 28.1.73. regaining their original fleetnumbers although 9610-2 remained on loan to Tillings until 6.73 (9610) and 8.73 (9611/2). As Eastern National had no requirement for these vehicles, a programme of converting all fifteen to 70 seat buses was begun. Fleetnumbers allocated followed on from the last FLFs ie 2932-2946 respectively. Before work began, eight of the vehicles were loaned to the United Counties Omnibus Company (2602/3/5/6/8/13/4) from 2.73. United Counties were at that time experiencing a chronic vehicle shortage and these relatively low capacity vehicles provided some welcome relief. The coaches were put to work from Kettering and Northampton depots. United Counties used the Eastern National fleetnumbers to identify the vehicles, as some had lost their fleetnumber plates, large white transfers were fixed in place. The vehicles were returned to Eastern National gradually: 2600 -4.73, 2606 -9.73, 2602 -5.74, 2608 -9.74, 2603/5/13/14 -1.75.

The conversion work carried out on the coaches to adapt them for service work was thorough, internally all seats, luggage racks and parcel shelves were removed and fitted with 70 bus seats as per the rest of the FLF bus fleet. Interior trim was replaced with the standard green rexine and green paint replaced the cream. The lighting was not altered and the curved parcel rack moldings were left in place on the roof cant panels. When built, the lower saloon gangway between the rear wheelarches was narrower than normal to facilitate the positioning of the forward facing seats that were fixed on top of the wheelarch. This arrangement was left unaltered on the original conversions, however following complaints by conductors at Chelmsford and Southend depots later conversions had the gangway suitably altered and the offending vehicles were re-allocated. The seats from 2601/4/7/9 were used to reseat Bristol MWs 9351/6-8 (YBD 202 10/2/3 DLY), the seats from which had been used to reseat ex Southdown Leopards (751-3 DCD) recently acquired by Tillings. The seats from 2611 (AVW 402F) were used in another secondhand Tillings coach SGF 482L a former Isle of Man Road Services RELH. It is possible that other FLF coach seats were used for reseatng other coaches and if you have any details please contact Andy Meadows.

Externally, the panelled over and frosted glass windows around the luggage compartment were glazed although the half glazed upper deck emergency door was left intact as were the window ventilators. The new standard NBC leaf green and white livery was applied although the chrome beading stripes were left unpainted, this made the coach conversions recognisable from the rest of the

FLF fleet.

of the fifteen coaches did not receive full conversions as detailed above, 2610/2942 (AVW 401F) received several modifications for one man operation (see chapter five) and driver training (see chapter six). The other vehicle 2606 (BVX 668B) was originally used for staff recruitment and later as a driver trainer (again detailed in chapter six). The vehicle was never converted for bus work and consequently its allotted fleetnumber 2938 was never used.

2937 (RWC 608) the former 2605 was further converted in 1978 to open top and was renumbered 2300 (see chapter 7).

PART FIVE

ONE MAN OPERATION

The term One Man Operation (OMO) despite being incorrect nowadays was at the time the term used for One Person Operation (OPO) and will therefore be used in this article being historically correct.

In 1972, Eastern National were seeking to extend OMO in order to combat rising costs and falling passenger levels. Although all of the single deck bus fleet had by then been adapted for OMO, only 24 double deckers were capable of being OMO, these being Bristol VRTs 3000-23. As deliveries of new vehicles at that time were very slow and given the high number of Bristol FLFs in the fleet, consideration was given to converting a Bristol FLF for OMO. Consequently 2898 (WVX 525F) was rebuilt at Central Works to make the vehicle suitable for OMO.

An electrically operated Setright ticket machine, power pack, change giver and change giving shute were fitted on a lower bulkhead to the immediate left of the driver. To facilitate this, the cab window was repositioned diagonally and a smaller, square bulkhead window was fitted. The repositioned cab window also meant a smaller bonnet had to be fitted as was a light above the ticket machine on the cab ceiling. Two illuminated 'One Man Operated Bus' signs were fitted one on the nearside between the wheelarch and doorway, the other hung from the canopy facing forwards. At the rear of the vehicle, the tail lamp clusters were replaced with the larger unit as fitted to new RELs at the time, these incorporated reversing lights. Inside the cab, the drivers seat was moved back slightly necessitating the rebuilding of the cab floor. A periscope for the driver to view the upper deck was fitted which meant that the CBC radiators had to be removed. The conductors locker under the stairs was enlarged and a 'Please Pay Driver' sign was fixed on the locker door.

After service trials, some further modifications were made including the fitting of an amplified communication system between passenger and driver and a sliding vertical panel was fitted to the partition between the cab and platform to stop passenger access to the change giver and to reduce drafts.

Following more service trials with 2898, it was decided to convert no less than 45 FLFs for OMO. In fact only a further 7 vehicles were converted! The next three vehicles treated were 2924/6/7 (AEV 818/20F AVW 396F) work being carried out at Central

Works and Prittlewell Works. These particular vehicles were chosen as they were not fitted with the CBC heating system thus making the conversion work a little easier. These and 2898 were known as Mk1 conversions. The next three vehicles were treated at Marshalls of Cambridge and were known as Mark 1A conversions. The vehicles were 2928/9/31 (AVW 397/8F AVX 973G).

The seventh vehicle to be adapted was 2942 (AVW 401F) in January 1974, this bus was previously coach 2610 and the OMO conversion work was carried out during its coach to bus conversion. The difference between 2942 and previous conversions was the additional cab door fitted behind and to the right of the drivers seat. The door opened onto the staircase which had to be completely rebuilt to ascend rearwards instead of forwards. This revised staircase layout took up more space on the upper deck with the consequent removal of three seats, a pair on the offside and a single on the nearside. A small window was fitted between the new door and the OMO equipment immediately behind the drivers seat. This enabled the driver with the aid of a mirror to view the lower saloon and bottom of the staircase. This was known as a Mark 2 conversion. A second Mk2 conversion appeared later in 1974, this being 2928 which had a Mk 1A conversion carried out the previous year.

2924 toured the company's depots as a demonstrator but found no favour with staff and was very confusing for the intending passenger, so used to this type of bus being crew operated. Experience gained on 2924s tour was used when the Mk2 conversion was initiated.

The main problem with OMO FLFs was the isolation of the driver from the rest of the bus. Consequently only three of the eight buses were used on a regular basis as OMO buses (2926/7/8/31 were never used as one man buses).

2898 and 2928 worked from Clacton depot on routes 107/8/9 between Jaywick, Clacton and Walton, while 2942 was allocated to Halstead for service 88 between Halstead and Colchester. 2942 was replaced by a VR in 1.76 and was subsequently moved to Clacton to replace 2898 for crew work, 2928 and 2942 soldiered on until 10.76 when 2928 resumed service crew operated and 2942 was transferred to the driver training fleet as 9006. This was not the end as in 1977 following service revisions in the Maldon area 2928 was allocated here for OMO school contracts and associated short service workings until being withdrawn from service in 1979.

It is worth mentioning here the subsequent history of 2928. Before being sold the bus was loaned to both United Counties and Alder Valley working from Bedford and Newbury depots. It was then sold (along with many other FLFs) to Ensigns (dealer), Purfleet who then exported the bus to Hong Kong where it was converted to open top and worked for Passenger Transport Services (Asia). The sad end came in 1989 when it was scrapped.

The FLF conversion programme although a failure was nevertheless a worthwhile and necessary experiment. Many other operators adapted their front entrance halfcab double deckers with varying degrees of success (or failure!). It is interesting to speculate as to how long the FLFs may have survived had a larger number been successfully converted as originally planned.

Eastern National Omnibus Co Ltd - Brentwood [BD] Depot - DP Saloons (1967)

EASTERN NATIONAL	HERONGATE	STONDON [TIPS CROSS]
PRIVATE	HERONGATE [OLD DOG]	ST VINCENTS HAMLET
SCHOOLS SERVICE	HUTTON DRIVE	SOUTHEND
WORKS SERVICE	HUTTON INDUSTRIAL EST	TILBURY FERRY
BISHOPS HALL ESTATE	HUTTON [THE CHEQUERS]	WEST HORNDON STATION
HORNBEAM CLOSE	HUTTON [THE PLOUGH]	OUTWOOD COMMON
BRENTWOOD	HOOK END	Note: OUTWOOD COMMON was a later addition.
BRENTWOOD STATION	UPMINSTER STATION	
BLACKMORE	ILFORD	
BASILDON TOWN CENTRE	[GANTS HILL]	
BULPHAN [CHURCH]	ILFORD [BROADWAY]	
BILLERICAY	LONDON [BOW]	
CHELMSFORD	LONDON [WOOD GREEN]	
COXTIE GREEN	LITTLE WARLEY [THE GREYHOUND]	
DODDINGHURST	ONGAR	
EAST HORNDON	PILGRIMS HATCH	
GRAYS	RAYLEIGH	
GREAT BURSTEAD		

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All enquiries welcome



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DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT MAGAZINE IS 3.1.92.