

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features
Issue 725 September 2024



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



fb.me/essexbus

Former First Essex Harwich Depot

Robert Appleton

The original Eastern National depot was in Kingsway, Dovercourt, acquired with the Silver Queen business in 1931. This depot was closed in 1967, and has been the Harwich and Dovercourt library for many years. The new depot on Station Approach at Harwich opened in 1967, retaining the DT depot code, because HH was in use for Hadleigh depot. Harwich depot survived deregulation, competition from Coastal Red, and privatisation.

However, it followed the pattern of small depots being closed. Harwich closed on 30 November 2013. Harwich - Colchester 102/103/104 services were transferred to Colchester depot. Harwich - Clacton services 3 & 4, and Harwich - Parkeston local services 20/A/22A/B were transferred to Clacton depot.

Since 30 November 2013 the depot had remained unused. Apparently it was leased from British Railways, now Network Rail, which delayed the sale. Proposals for alternative uses came to nothing. It seems that the issue with the lease was resolved, because a few months ago the depot building was advertised for sale by Whybrow & Dodds, commercial property managers and building surveyors. It has been sold to D H Truck Diagnostics Ltd, who maintain and repair commercial vehicles. Their nameplate is on the door to the former enquiry office, although the First Harwich Depot sign still remains at the present time. So at last a new use has been found for this depot building.



Both photos 16 July 2024 **Robert Appleton**





Above: Nightfall at Quayside Depot, Colchester on 17 July 2024. Eastern National Badgerline style heritage liveried Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse 37007 (WX55 VHR) with the two Remembrance liveried buses parked together, similar 32673 (SN55 HFA) with green top and Enviro 400 33825 (SN63 MYH) with blue top. To the right is one of the three Enviro MMCs, 34421-3, in X20 Airlink livery. **Ryan Hannah.** More on 37007 on pages 15-17.

Front Cover: The livery 37007 is in was introduced in 1993 to update the 1986 Eastern National post NBC livery. Stephenson's Bristol VR / ECW 3129 (XHK 234X), numerically the last VR new to Eastern National in September 1981, has been magnificently restored to the 1986 livery. It features 'City Bus' vinyls and WW (Walthamstow) depot plates that were used on many EN VRs that operated on London Regional Transport services from 1986. Although this bus received the green and yellow livery in February 1988, it did not itself carry these vinyls or depot plates, being allocated to Southend. However, it did later work on LRT services, being transferred to Ponders End in January 1991 for its last nine months service with Thamesway (which it joined after the July 1990 split) before being delicensed for disposal and then sold to United Welsh Coaches in January 1992. The repaint was done by TVS of Laindon, with vinyl work undertaken by 4 site, and the original style EN fleet number and allocation plates fabricated by Tippers of Cornwall, these aluminium plates being pressed in 2024 using the same presses as used by EN for its 1964 and subsequent plates. 3129's first public event was at the annual Imberbus event on 17 August 2024. These photos were taken on 15th at Langford. **John G Lidstone**
Far more detail on 3129's restoration will be in the next issue of 'Bus & Coach Preservation'.
Another photo of 3129 is on page 15. A history of Walthamstow depot will be in EBM Extra 7, due out three weeks after this issue, more details of this on page 4.

Rear Cover: In EBM 716 we reported on Lodge Coaches acquisition of Bedford VAL70 / Duple Viceroy TFV 475J from Maldwyn Evans of Pentrefoelas in November 2023 plus included a couple of photos. It represents a similar VAL, KNK 362G, that Lodge had from 1971 to 1975. It is seen at Lodge's Classic Car and Bus Event at their depot at High Easter on 18 August 2024, now in Lodge livery. **Top: Chris Stewart. Bottom: Richard Delahoy.**

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Subscriptions

The calendar year subscription for 2024 is £27 for
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copies sent by e-mail. New members may join from
any month, but subscriptions will always run to
December from whichever month the member
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EBM Extra

EBM is published monthly. In addition, we aim to
publish two Extras each year full of historical features.
These are supplied to members free of charge, subject
to funding.

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.

Target Dates for EBM 726

Reports to Sub-Editors **21 September**

Sub-Editor drafts to Editor **27 September**

Dispatch by Printers on or before **5 October**

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent
up to 28th 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
officers. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy, but
the Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors
published.

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Group Notices

Welcome to New Member

Stephen Mirrington, Chelmsford - 1229

Group Meetings

These are being held on **Saturday afternoons** at **The Quaker Meeting House**, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2QL, which is a five-ten minute walk from Chelmsford Bus & Railway Stations. Doors open at 1400 for a 1430 start, ending at 1630. There is very limited on-site parking, accessed via Cedar Avenue West, we would ask that you leave these for those less able to walk.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 14 September | Alan Osborne - Picturesque Transport. A varied selection of views of buses, trolleybuses and trams in scenic locations (no garage yard shots!). Old and new, near and far, Essex and beyond. |
| 12 October | Bring your own slides or USB stick. (The previously announced speaker and topic postponed until 11 January.) |
| 9 November | Robert Appleton - Cheshire and North Wales 1984 - 2002. |
| 14 December | Richard Delahoy - 20 years ago. |
| 11 January 2025 | Tony Francis - From Camberwell to Westminster via Reigate. A career in transport and lessons learnt. (Postponed from 12 October.) |

Meetings are being held jointly with our good friends at The Omnibus Society, Eastern & Southern Branch, who are very generously paying for the room hire so entrance is FREE.

The Running Card

Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

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

Sundays 1 & 15 September: Canvey Island Transport Museum open days. 15th is a heritage event.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Saturday 5 October: Classic Vehicle Day, Ipswich Transport Museum. 1100-1600. Includes bus rides of area.

Sunday 6 October: Classic bus running day in Chesham.

Saturday 19 October: Delaine Twilight Heritage Running Day. Museum open 1330-1900.

Saturday 26 October: Halloween event. East Anglian Transport Museum Carlton Colville. 1500-2000.

Sunday 27 October: Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum, North Hykeham. Local rides of area.

Saturday 2 November: Aldenham Transport Spectacular. Allum House, Allum Lane, Elstree, WD6 3PT 1000-1600. £4 entrance.

Saturday 16 November: Enfield Transport Bazaar. St Stephens Church Hall, Village Road, EN1 2EY. 1100-1430.

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

Bus Trips

A reminder of two forthcoming trips.

From Southend to Brighton, Sunday 22 September 2024. Details in EBM 724.

Omnibus Society Heritage vehicle tour to Guildford to visit Safeguard Coaches (100 years old this year) and Go-Coach at Swanley, Sunday 20 October 2024. Details in EBM 723.

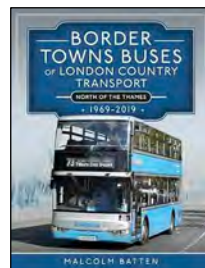
Book Review

Roger A Smith

Border Town Buses of London Country Transport North of The Thames, 1969-2019, Malcolm Batten
(Pen and Sword Books) Hardcover

This excellent book looks at the operators in the towns on the edge of the London Transport area north of the Thames. It starts in the east in Thurrock and works round in a westerly direction to High Wycombe. Of particular interest to EBM readers are the chapters on Thurrock (Tilbury, Grays and Lakeside), Romford, Brentwood, Ongar, Epping, Harlow and Bishop's Stortford, featuring operators such as Eastern National, Harris Bus, Ensignbus, NIBS, Central Connect, etc.

This 160 page book is well written by Malcolm Batten, who obviously knows his subject, and is amply illustrated with excellent photographs, both black and white and colour. It can be purchased for £28 plus 10% p&p from FREEPOST MDS BOOK SALES or online. Also available from other specialist transport book sellers. However, it may be cheaper on Amazon; a Kindle (electronic) version is also available there. A companion volume, with less local interest, covers south of the Thames.



Book Review

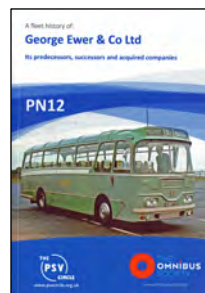
Owen Woodliffe

George Ewer & Co Ltd - A fleet history of its predecessors, successors and acquired companies.

This massive undertaking was, to my knowledge, started over 50 years ago and several people have been involved during this time, but the task was taken to its fruition by Group members John Card and David Grimmett.

Being a PSV Circle / Omnibus Society publication, it records every known vehicle operated by its fleets and acquired companies (there are 17 of these alone) and includes brief histories of these. It therefore comes to 300 pages, with 16 pages of black and white and 16 of colour photos. The cover photo is appropriately of a Harrington bodied Leyland at the Duke of Wellington, Hatfield Peverel, all of which were associated with Ewers, Grey-Green and services to Essex and East Anglia.

It is £28 and can be ordered on the PSV Circle website. OS and PSVC members can purchase it for £21.



As an aside, there is a photo, from Owen Woodliffe's collection, in the latest edition of Classic Bus, Issue 192, of the coach used in the film 'The Italian Job', Harrington Legionnaire bodied ALR 453B, also taken at the Duke of Wellington refreshment stop at Hatfield Peverel on its way to Clacton, Frinton and Walton, when new in maroon & grey livery with Ewer style 'Battens' fleet name. (With thanks to Andrew Colebourne.)

EBM Extra 7

The next issue of EBM Extra will be published towards the end of September and sent to all members by the usual distribution methods, thanks to the very generous sponsorship of William Morrison. The in depth historical articles look at two very contrasting Eastern National depots - Vange (the forerunner of today's Basildon depot) in the 1950s and Walthamstow (home of the LRT tendered service fleet) in the late 1980s / early 1990s. We take a look at the business of Aubrey Letch, the small north Essex operator taken over by the ambitious Donald MacGregor and subsequently expanded into today's Heddingham business. The front cover features the only known colour shot of a Letch bus.

Other features include a day out with John Rugg, a further example of an Essex / Scotland bus 'exchange', a photographic look at some of the variety that existed in some of the earlier years in the Stephensons fleet, and a trivia corner examining the case of the missing route number.



Many readers will recognise the name Derek S Giles, the legendary Traffic Superintendent at Southend Transport and life-long Omnibus Society member and supporter. He was a fairly prolific photographer and his collection passed to the Omnibus Society on his death. Now, 4,000 black & white images from the early 1950s have just been made available to purchase, and what gems there are there! There is a very strong south Essex flavour to this collection, with the obvious names such as Eastern National, Westcliff Motor Services, City Coach Company and Southend Corporation, plus 'lesser' operators including Benfleet & District, Canvey & District and Campbells of Pitsea. Smaller and more obscure operators such as Victoria Coaches of Leigh-on-Sea and various Southend coach operators also feature.

Sales are handled by the Transport Library, see www.thetransportlibrary.co.uk and use the search box, starting with the word "Giles". Captions include the location and date (but beware there are a few obvious - and some less obvious - caption errors at present). The operator is listed as that current when each photo was taken, so for example most City pictures are listed under Westcliff, some Campbells under Eastern National and so on. With 4,000 Giles images now available (and more to follow one day), the easiest way to search is by his name and an operator or place name, e.g. "Giles Southend" will produce 818 matches, refining that to "Giles Southend Corporation" will reduce the list to 427 pictures.

The images can be viewed online and prints ordered in a variety of sizes, 6" x 4" being the most popular at £1.20 per print (prices vary by print size, don't be tempted to go for the default of 'postcard', these are smaller than 6" x 4" but more expensive). Omnibus Society members are reminded that they can buy at a discounted price, see the Omnibus Magazine for the discount code.

But beware - if you are interested in this era, there are just too many to choose from! Set yourself a budget, or win the lottery. Selecting just one photo to illustrate this feature with is incredibly difficult, but from the 214 that I've bought so far, I was particularly taken by the **below** shot of the prototype Bristol Lodekka LHY 949, at Southend Victoria Station on 3 April 1951, under the trolleybus wires whilst on demonstration loan to Westcliff Motor Services. The collection includes two other shots of this incredibly significant bus (which sadly did not survive into preservation) whilst on loan to Eastern National, taken a few yards from this shot, on service 11 to Chelmsford. Photographer **Derek S Giles**, copyright The Bus Archive, ref DG02_01058.



It will be recalled that when the Newman family sold Ensignbus to First Bus in March 2023, they retained ownership of the heritage fleet, with it being temporarily kept at Purfleet whilst an alternative location was sought. Since then, plans have been proceeding to establish a bus museum to showcase the collection and continue restoration work. A former farm has been acquired in Great Yeldham, close to the heritage Colne Valley Railway, and considerable work has already taken place there. Planning permission is still awaited for the erection of the two main museum buildings, but once that is granted, the project is expected to proceed quite quickly. There is currently no public access to the site.

Meanwhile, the heritage fleet has been moved to secure undercover storage elsewhere in Essex (see picture on page 26 of EBM 723 of seven of the buses on their way to that new storage). One recent addition to the heritage collection is the former Kowloon Motor Bus AEC Regent A165 that was owned by preservationist John Shearman, who sadly died earlier this year; it is already in store at Great Yeldham as seen in my picture **right**. Known in Hong Kong as a 'Long Dragon', it is 34' long and was licenced to carry 117 passengers. It carries a 1966 GB registration appropriate for its age, ABW 225D.

As reported under Service Revisions, First Ensignbus have now deregistered the heritage services that used to run on the first Saturday in December, meaning that last December's running day was the final one - as I think most of us expected at the time. All good things must come to an end, but the collection will be on show again once the museum opens and rides will be offered, linking the museum to other local attractions. An Operator's Licence is already held, currently for two vehicles, in the name of Zero2 Bus Museum Ltd.

We look forward to further developments with interest!



Arrow Taxis and Essex & Suffolk Dart

As mentioned last month, operations ceased suddenly on Friday 26 July 2024, when these two companies ceased trading. Essex County Council and local operators reacted quickly to continue providing services, which operated without charging fares until registrations were accepted.

10 (M-F) West Hanningfield Temple Grove - Pleshey, Back Lane. Operation passed to **Central Connect** from 5 August. Renumbered **48**. In addition, an improved timetable, with additional journeys, has been introduced.

12 (M-S) Wickford The Swans - Billericay, Arlington Way. Operation passed to **Central Connect**, from 31 July, with a slightly reduced timetable until 3 August (1050 and 1530 ex Wickford and 1120 and 1600 ex Billericay not operated). Full timetable resumed from 5 August.

45 (M-F) South Woodham Ferrers Asda - Bradwell-on-Sea Parker Court. Operation of this NEW SERVICE passed to **NIBS** with a full timetable from 29 July (0900 and 1330 ex South Woodham and 1100 and 1500 ex Bradwell-on-Sea). Arrow had agreed a revised timetable with ECC but this was never implemented due to the failure of the business.

99A (M-F) Maldon - Broomfield Hospital. This service was not operated between 27 July and 27 August, but was reintroduced on Wednesday 28 August on a three month temporary contract awarded to **Stephensons**. Renumbered **99** with an amended timetable.

322/323/324 (M-S) Bishop's Stortford Interchange - Lindsell / Stebbing. Operation passed to **First Essex** from 31 July, initially for three months, with a normal timetable being operated.

DaRT 3 (M-S) North Braintree Demand Responsive Service. Operation passed to **Flagfinders** (t/a **Central Connect**) from 31 July.

Sullivan Buses

Although most of their operations are outside of our area, it is worth recording that Sullivan Buses withdrew from operating TfL contracts from the night of Friday 2 August 2024.

The one service that operates into Essex is the **549** (Loughton Station - South Woodford Station) which operates every 90 minutes on Monday - Saturday. This passed to **Stagecoach London**, on an emergency basis, from 5 August (no service operated on 3rd).

The **549** had been due to be withdrawn anyway and replaced from Saturday 7 September by a revised **W14** (Loughton Station - Whipps Cross Hospital) operated by **Stagecoach London**, operating every 60 minutes on a daily basis. New electric single-deckers are due for the route but may not be available on the first day.

More information on route 549 is on pages 31, 32 and inside rear cover.

26 June 2024

24 (M-S) Southend Travel Centre Southchurch, Whittingham Avenue **Stephensons**. Three additional evening journeys added (last bus from Southend is now 2015) with BSIP+ funding from the UK Government via Southend-on-Sea City Council.

1 July

Polly's Field 2 (n/k) Braintree, Polly's Field - Braintree Village Shopping Centre **Braintree Community Transport**. Service withdrawn.

19 July

E (Sch Only) Takeley, Chestnut Way - Birchwood School **ACME**. Closed school service, withdrawn.

M1 (Sch Only) Felstead, Baynard Avenue - Stansted Mountfitchet School **ACME**. Closed school service, withdrawn.

M2 (Sch Only) Leaden Roding Village Hall - Stansted Mountfitchet School **ACME**. Closed school service, withdrawn.

M3 (Sch Only) Molehill, Green Road - Stansted Mountfitchet School **ACME**. Closed school service, withdrawn.

29 July

COG1 (M-F) Coggeshall - Kelvedon Railway Station **Coggeshall Community Bus**. Revised timetable.

22/23 August only

P&R Clacton Shopping Village - Clacton, Marine Parade East circular **Hedingham**. Park & Ride service for Clacton Airshow. Basically every 10 minutes from 0900 -1810, although slightly reduced to every 15 minutes and enhanced to every 8 minutes at certain times. On Thursday 22nd, service continues every 20 or 30 minutes until 2140 from Clacton Shopping Village (2200 from Pier Avenue West).

31 August

22 (Daily) Grays Bus Station - Aveley, Usk Road **Ensignbus**. Revised route and timetable. On M-F, revised to operate every 15 minutes, currently every 20 minutes. In addition, one bus an hour extended from Aveley Usk Road to Purfleet-on-Thames Station. On M-S, some early morning and evening journeys, plus some journeys on Sunday, are interworked with service **73** to provide through journeys from Aveley to Tilbury, replacing **77/A** & **Z1** which are withdrawn.

32 (Sch Only) Purfleet, Uplands Estate - Aveley, Usk Road **Ensignbus**. Service withdrawn, replaced by a journey on service **22**.

33 (M-S) Grays Bus Station - Chafford Hundred Station **Ensignbus**. Revised timetable. Off peak M-F reduced from every 30 to every 60 minutes. At school times, revised to operate via Saffron Road and Rainbow Road, rather than Lancaster Road and Mayflower Road, due to badly parked cars.

44 (M-S) Lakeside Bus Station - Grays Bus Station **Ensignbus**. Revised timetable. On M-F, earlier and later journeys introduced. School journeys to & from Harris Riverside Academy retimed.

66 (Daily) Grays Bus Station - Chadwell St Mary, Longhouse Road **Ensignbus**. Revised timetable, on Saturday, reduced from every 30 to every 60 minutes.

73 (M-S) Lakeside Bus Station - Tilbury Civic Square **Ensignbus**. Revised route and timetable. On M-S daytimes, extended from Civic Square to Tilbury Asda. On M-S, some early morning and evening journeys, plus some journeys on Sunday, are interworked with service **22** to provide through journeys from Aveley to Tilbury, replacing **77/A** & **Z1** which are withdrawn. Daily, four journeys operate to & from Tilbury Amazon Warehouse Bus Station, on M-S instead of Asda and on Su as an extension beyond Civic Square.

77/A (M-S) Aveley, Usk Road - Tilbury Asda **Ensignbus**. Service withdrawn, replaced by revised services **22** & **73**.

83 (M-S) Lakeside Bus Station - Chadwell St Mary, Longhouse Road **Ensignbus**. Revised timetable, with additional morning peak and later journeys on M-F. Additional early morning journey on Saturdays.

88/A/C (M-S) Grays Bus Station - Stifford Clays, Crawford Avenue **Ensignbus**. Revised timetable, services **88A/C** are withdrawn and **88** now operates hourly.

X80 (Daily) Chafford Hundred Station - Bluewater Bus Station **Ensignbus**. Revised timetable. Except for one morning peak journey on M-F, section of route between Chafford Hundred Station and Lakeside Bus Station withdrawn.

Z1 (Daily) Aveley Usk Road - Tilbury Amazon **Ensignbus**. Service withdrawn, replaced by revised services **22** & **73**.

The **Ensignbus** heritage bus services, which operated on the Annual Running Day, have been deregistered from the above date. These last operated on 2 December 2023 and were:

X21 Upminster Station - Brentwood High Street

X54 Lakeside Bus Station - RAF Hornchurch Heritage Centre

X55 Upminster Station - Gravesend, West Street

X81 Shenfield Station - Tilbury Ferry.

1 September

13/A/B/C (M-S) North Weald, The Talbot - Waltham Cross Bus Station **Central Connect**. Revised so that almost all journeys that currently operate Epping Station - Waltham Cross Bus Station are extended to & from North Weald, as a result the existing **13C** journeys that operate to North Weald are renumbered **13**. Some Saturday evening journeys will terminate at Epping Station and these are numbered **13B**. No change to the Sch **13A**.

14/X (M-F) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Upshire Shops **Central Connect**. Further to EBM 724, a small number of journeys are reintroduced at peak times, some operate direct and do not serve Quaker Lane and are numbered **14X**.

15 (M-S) Harlow Tesco Store - Waltham Cross Bus Station **Central Connect**. Section of route between Harlow Bus Station and Harlow Tesco withdrawn (this is served by service **24**). Revised to operate hourly on M-S, and serves Upshire and Paternoster Hill in both directions. On Saturday, the service is revised to operate Harlow Bus Station - Waltham Cross Bus Station, via the same route as M-F. Some journeys on M-F will operate via Katherines in Harlow and these are numbered **15A**.

19/A (M-S) Chelmsford Bus Station - Harlow Bus Station **First Essex**. Revised timetable, with a Sunday service on route 19A (one journey each way) introduced.

20 (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Hullbridge, The Anchor **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-F to improve punctuality.

28 (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Basildon Bus Station **First Essex**. Minor change on M-F, the 0813 Pitsea Broadway - Basildon Bus Station is withdrawn.

31/331 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Burnham-on-Crouch Clock Tower **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-S to improve punctuality.

35/B/C (M-S) Bishop's Stortford Interchange - Hertford Bus Station **Central Connect**. Timetable revised on M-S, with additional journeys extended across Bishop's Stortford to Parsonage Estate, numbered **35C**.

36/A (M-S) Bishop's Stortford Interchange - Buntingford **Central Connect**. Replaces service **386** Bishop's Stortford Interchange - Stevenage Bus Station between these points, to a much improved timetable of hourly on M-F and two hourly on Saturday (currently only five journeys daily). The section between Buntingford and Stevenage is replaced by service **37**, which will operate every 2 hours.

46 (M-S) Chelmsford Bus Station - Ongar, Two Brewers **First Essex**. Minor timetable changes on S only.

70/170/370 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Halstead, Colne Road **First Essex**. Minor changes to M-F morning peak timetable.

100 (Daily) Basildon Bus Station - Lakeside Bus Station **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-F to improve punctuality.

102/104 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - Harwich Bus Station. Revised timetable on M-S to improve punctuality.

300 (Daily) Basildon Bus Station - Chelmsford Bus Station **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-F to improve punctuality.

375 (M-S) Grays Bus Station - Horndon-on-the-Hill, South Crescent **Central Connect**. NEW SERVICE with BSIP+ funding from the UK Government via Thurrock Council, five journeys each way at 2-3 hour intervals. This partly replaces the former **374** (Basildon-Grays), withdrawn when Thurrock Council withdrew funding support in September 2023.

561 (Sch Only) Basildon Bus Station - Chelmsford, St John Payne School **First Essex**. Revised timetable.

621 (Sch Only) Roxwell Village Hall - Ingatestone, New Road **First Essex**. NEW SERVICE, one journey in each direction (0740 ex Roxwell, 1543 ex Ingatestone).

725 (Sch Only) Basildon Bus Station - Southend Boys High School **First Essex**. Revised timetable.

910 (Sch only) Marks Tey Railway Station - Honeywood School **Hedingham**. Service withdrawn.

S1 (Daily) Colchester Highwoods - Wivenhoe Railway Station **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-S to improve punctuality.

S2 (Daily) Colchester Highwoods - Stanway Sainsburys **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-S to improve punctuality.

S10 (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Colchester Hospital **First Essex**. Revised timetable.

X10 (Daily) Basildon Bus Station - Stansted Airport Bus Station **First Essex**. Minor changes to M-F early evening journeys between Basildon and Runwell, no change to services serving Stansted Airport.

3 September

FHS1 (Sch Only) Watchouse Green - Forest Hall School **ACME**. NEW SERVICE, closed school contract.

4 September

SW1A (Sch Only) Little Chesterford - Newport Joyce Franklin Academy **Vectare**. Closed school contract, passed from **Vectare** to **Acme** from start of new school term and renumbered **SW2**.

SW1B (Sch Only) Great Chesterford - Saffron Walden County High School **Vectare**. Closed school contract, passed from **Vectare** to **Acme** from start of new school term and renumbered **SW1**.

Apologies that part of the caption at the bottom of page 32 of last month's issue was reproduced at the bottom of page 11. There was no connection between these two pages and the editor is at a loss as to how he managed to do this! Page 32 was OK.

Part 2 of Robert Appleton's article on Clacton has been held over due to lack of space this month.

Adam Kelleher

Acquired Vehicles

47482	SN64 CNO	SA9DSRXXX14141799	AK841	B37F	11/14	First South Yorkshire
47483	SN64 CNU	SA9DSRXXX14141800	AK842	B37F	11/14	First South Yorkshire

Wrightbus StreetLite DF. Acquired August 2024 from First South Yorkshire & Midlands (Doncaster depot). In Urban livery. 47482 entered service on route S5 on 16 August and 47483 on routes 104/102 on 22nd.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 4 2024/25 (30 June - 27 July) additional to EBM 724

32628 CR (oos)-Disposal, 37035 CR (oos)-Disposal

Period 5 2024/25 (28 July - 24 August)

33563 BN-BN (oos), 33669 CR-CR (oos), 33686 CR-CR (oos), 33689 CR-CR (oos), 33697 CF-CR, 33992 BN-BN (oos), 33994 CF-CF (oos), 33995 CF-CF (oos), 36839 CF (oos)-CF, 37007 CR-CR (oos), 47482 FG-CR, 47483 FG-CR, 63342 BN (oos)-BN, 63370 BN-BN (oos), 63381 BN (oos)-BN

Disposals

July 2024: 32628, 37035

Essex Airlink Adverts

Most, if not all, double-deckers in Essex Airlink livery have received side adverts for all three Airlink routes, promoting the '£2 to Stansted' fare. A couple of vehicles not in this livery have also received them, see 'Repaints' below. These may only be relevant for four months, depending what decisions the new Government makes on subsidised bus fares.

Repaints

33985 from First Glasgow Urban with gold relief into new corporate livery at TVS, Laindon. Back at Basildon Depot on 2 August. Returned to service without fleet names or other vinyls.

34424 from Urban 2 livery with lilac front (ex-Network Norwich) to Essex Airlink livery with branding for route X30 at Mardens. Its first day out after repaint was to the Stonham Barns Big Bus Show on 11 August and it was back in service the next day. See photo on page 14.

Eight vehicles are required for route X30. This repaint, plus the seven Scania's, makes eight double-deckers in X30 livery. However, as has been seen from reports in EBM over the months, nearly every day one or more Enviro 40D / Enviro MMCs in standard livery are used on the route. However, rather than have at least one spare bus in this livery, First Essex have decided to repaint 34425 and 34426 into the new corporate livery but with the aforementioned Essex Airlink side adverts added, so that they can be used as spares on the X30 but also are in standard livery for use on Chelmsford's other routes that use double-deckers (70/170/372). 34426 at least, and possibly 34425 as well, actually received these adverts before going to repaint. So:

34425 from Urban 2 livery with lilac front (ex-Network Norwich) to new corporate livery at Mardens. Back in service in new livery on 13 August. Also see photo on page 14.

When it was collected from Mardens, 34426 replaced it there for repainting, also from Urban 2 livery with lilac front (ex-Network Norwich) to new corporate livery. It was back in service on shuttles for the New World Festival on 24th. Both with side adverts for Essex Airlink services.

Below: Some readers may not be familiar with local bus services in Harlow. This map shows new ECC routes 407 and 417, operated by First Essex, which commenced operation on 29 July 2024, and the differences between them. Courtesy **First Essex Buses**

A photo of a bus on the 407 on the first day is on page 13.

from **29th July 2024**

Hey Harlow!

We're running

your **NEW**

407 & 417





Little Parndon

417

Hobbs Road

Hodnors Road

Princess Alexandra Hospital

407

Fifth Avenue

Harlow Town

Retail Park

Edinburgh Way

Station Road

Old Harlow

Aspen Way

London Road

Golden Way

407

417

Harlow Bus Station

up to **every hour**
six days a week

all day
£ **2.70**

from **First Bus**

Around the Depots

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

Colchester

News of the Harwich routes (27 July-23 August).

During the school summer holidays, 0710 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 0900 return were operated by double-deckers on several days. Noted were 33668 (5th, 20th), 33680 (8th), 33682 (14th), 33687 (15th, 16th), 33688 (9th), 37006 (31 July, 23rd), 37037 (6th), 37133 (19th) and 37621 (21st, 22nd).

Only two double-deckers on 1725 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1900 102 return: 37134 (7th), 33670 (16th). On 22nd, 37140 worked 2035 Colchester - Harwich 102.

The majority of journeys were worked by Wrightbus StreetLites or Volvo B7RLEs 69515-20. The two StreetLites acquired from First South Yorkshire & Midlands also reached Harwich: 47482 on 1205 Colchester - Harwich 102 & 1345 return on Sunday 18th and 47483 on 1725 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1900 102 return on 22nd, its first day in service in Essex. 47482 came to Harwich again on 20th, 21st and 23rd. Two ADL Enviro 200 MMCs in Airlink livery also reached Harwich: 67189 (13th, 23rd), 67190 (20th). Sister 67197 in black livery reached Harwich on 31 July, 1, 2, 9, 14 and 15 August.

Non Airlink liveried vehicles on X20: 33668, 33676, 33692, 33713, 37133, 37135, 37140, 37613, 63331, 69516, 69518 and 69519. Plus, Volvo B7TL 37004 unusual on 22nd.

Single-deckers on route 320: 67190 (16th), 67197 (19th), 69520 (8th & 12th).

Airlink liveried 67190, possibly confusing potential X10 passengers in Chelmsford, on 371 (9th).

Chelmsford

Standard liveried Enviro 400 MMCs on X30: 33996, 33997 and 33998 plus Enviro 400s 33656 and 33705. 67162 (7th), 67805 (8th) single-deckers on 372.

44469 on 59 (28th, first day of First Essex regaining the ECC Sunday contract).

67735 on X30 (12th).

Basildon

44001 on 9 (2nd & 14th), on X10 shorts (7th, 8th & 23rd). 44909 on 251 (11th), on 9 (12th, 13th & 15th), on X10 shorts (22nd). 63167 (8th) & 63373 (14th) long StreetLites on 9.

Hadleigh

44927 on 28 (8th). 47625 on 4/A (28th, first day).

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Stephen Barham, Dale Bell, David Edwards, John Podgorski, Roger A Smith, Derek Stebbing, Andrew Toms, Robert West, Bustimes, Bus Lists on the Web, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

Below: Recently acquired Wrightbus StreetLite 47483 (SN64 CNU) on its second day of service with First Essex, at Colchester Bus Station on 23 August 2024 having arrived on route 371. **Derek Stebbing**



First Essex News in Pictures

Mini Enviro 200 44900 (AY08 EKT) is on the one-way loop around the Aspen Way Housing Estate on the first day of operation of new ECC tendered route 407, 29 July 2024. The loop is illustrated on page 11.

Owen Woodliffe



The collapse of Arrow Taxis caused Essex County Council to reassign routes 322/323/324 to First Essex on a three month temporary contract. Mini Enviro 200 44914 (YX09 AGZ) is passing through Great Dunmow on 21 August 2024 on a short working of route 323 to Tesco. No fares were being charged as the registration had yet to be approved by Eastern Traffic Area.

Owen Woodliffe



First Essex's Pride liveried Enviro 400 33425 has recently been off road, so First Eastern Counties Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 36202 (BN12 WOC) was borrowed from Great Yarmouth for Colchester Pride on 17 August 2024. It spent the previous night at Quayside Depot as seen here.

David Edwards



Enviro 400 and Enviro 300 in new corporate livery. 33697 (SN12 AHC), which featured last month in its 'Frequent Fourteens' first Leicester orange and red livery before being repainted, and 67805 (SN13 CPE) at the Stonham Barns Big Bus Show on 11 August 2024.
Nigel Clark



Just to the right in the above photo is Enviro 400 MMC 34424 (SN17 MTX), also recently repainted, indeed on its first day out after repainting from Network Norwich livery to Essex Airlink livery. Here it is the next day, in service on route X30, turning from Eastwood Road into Rayleigh High Street. Note the new advert for the three Airlink routes referred to on page 10.

Nigel Clark

A photo of this bus in Network Norwich livery was in EBM 722.



Sister 34425 (SN17 MTY) in its 'hybrid' of new corporate livery and Essex Airlink adverts at Chelmsford Bus Station on 16 August.

Adam Kelleher

A photo of this bus in Network Norwich livery was in EBM 723.



Whilst First Essex are repainting smart looking acquired vehicles that were only repainted two years ago or less, most of the native fleet of StreetLites and Enviro 200s, now up to 11 years old, have never had a repaint in their lives and some are looking very scruffy. Enviro 200 44548 (YX13 AKN) isn't as bad as many, but its mismatched front corner panels do not present a good impression. Also at Chelmsford Bus Station on 16 August

Adam Kelleher



It is exactly four years since 37007 (WX55 VHR) appeared on the front cover of the September 2020 issue of Essex Bus News (number 677) resplendent in recently received 1993 Badgerline style Eastern National livery. It had entered service in that livery, as part of the celebrations of 70 years of Eastern National, on 5 August 2020. It has been withdrawn following its MOT expiration, and is seen on 10 August 2024, on route 75 in Maldon High Street on its last day of service. Its last journeys, in the evening, were on route 86 from Colchester to West Mersea and back.

Dave Arnold

More photos of 37007 are on the next two pages.



A rear photo of cover star Bristol VR / ECW 3129 (XHK 234X) at Langford on 15 August 2024.

John G Lidstone

Another photo of a bus in this livery (albeit without the City Bus vinyls) is on page 25.



When 37007 met 3072



Perhaps surprisingly, 37007 (WX55 VHR) had never met up with Luke Deal's preserved Bristol VR / ECW 3072 (KOO 790V) in the same livery, although lockdowns had played their part in that. But before 37007 was taken out of service, Luke very kindly brought 3072 to Colchester on 28 July 2024 to allow many photos to be taken of the two buses together for posterity. Just a small selection are included on these two pages.

A final thanks to Mardens and John Lidstone for producing such a splendid recreation of the 1993 livery on 37007.

Above: The opportunity was taken to present a colourful line up of Colchester vehicles at Quayside Depot. As well as 37007 and 3072, Urban livery, red shuttles livery, single and double deck blue Airlink liveries, Thamesway livery, both Remembrance liveries, Essex Bus green and new corporate livery can all be seen. **Luke Deal**

Below: 37007 and 3072 together at Quayside. **Luke Deal**





Above: In Colchester High Street. **Ryan Hannah**

Below: Rear view along Haven Road near Quayside depot. **Luke Deal**



Services

Ensignbus operated on the Bakerloo Line rail replacement service 718 (Queens Park to Harrow & Wealdstone) from 3 to 8 August 2024, replacing Sullivan Buses who were due to operate it but suddenly pulled out of TfL work the day before it started (as reported in 'Service Revisions' above).

Ensignbus provided a shuttle service between Brentwood Station and the Appetite Festival at Kelvedon Hall, Kelvedon Hatch on Saturday & Sunday 3 & 4 August. Most types of double-decker were seen along with a couple of Enviro 200 MMCs.

Cadbury (celebrating its 200th anniversary this year) partnered with First Bus to create two promotional bus trips to the seaside over the weekends of 10 & 11 and 17 & 18 August. Families were able to enter a ballot to book the service with over 300 places up for grabs. As well as travel to & from the beach provided by First Bus, families were greeted upon arrival at the beach with a complimentary Cadbury Flake 99 and each passenger received a free return bus ticket for a local First Bus operated journey, valid for three months.

On the first weekend, the service ran from Tower Hill in London to Southend-on-Sea. BCI Enterprise 406 (39052, LX19 EAG) was specially wrapped to be the lead bus of likely three. However, possibly because of current events at the time which may have put some people off from travelling to Southend, in the end only 56 people turned up on the Saturday and only one vehicle, 406, was required. On the second weekend the services departed from Leeds and Bradford heading to the sandy shores of Bridlington, 406 was again used. It was seen at Leeds Bramley depot on the evening of Friday 16th, ready for service the next day.

Below: 406 at Westcliff, Western Esplanade, Palmeira Arches on Saturday 10th. **Richard Delahoy**

The 'Ensignbus' display was used when the bus was in service, possibly to avoid confusion with Ensignbus's own 99 which also features a 99 cone on its liveries. But a 'First Bus & Flake 99' display was used for promotional & publicity purposes. It also carried this display when in service in Yorkshire, where there was no clash of route numbers.





Above: Rear view in Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea on 10th. The circular purple symbol behind the driver's cab window celebrates Cadbury's 200 years. **John G Lidstone.** **Below:** 406 has also been used on local routes in this wrap, as seen at Grays Bus Station on route 73 on 22 August. **David Hewitt**

Vehicles on Loan

Enviro 200 MMCs 706/707/710 (YY18 THN/U/Z) were loaned to Carousel Buses, High Wycombe in late July 2024 and were returned on 5 August.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy, John Lidstone, Owen Woodliffe and LOTS.



Acquired Vehicles

Further to EBM 717 (January 2024), it seems that the four ADL Enviro 200s acquired from Go Ahead London are due for Heddingham after all and not for Konnectbus. YX61 DVR is well on the way to completion, converted to single door and in full Heddingham livery at Plymouth in mid-July. YX61 BXL / BXM / DVP are all due to be so treated but BXM is still in Go Ahead red at CN depot having been stored there for months. These are expected to take fleet numbers 269-272 but this is still to be confirmed. There seems to be delay in their completion due to recertification. A correction to EBM 717, their London fleet numbers were prefixed SE not SOE.

Withdrawn Vehicles - Status Update

256	EU55 BWC	ADL Dart / Pointer - removed for scrap 7 August 2024.
258	EU56 FLN	ADL Dart / Pointer - removed for scrap 7 August 2024.
276	YX57 BXD	ADL Dart / Enviro 200 - long term off road and has reportedly been withdrawn.
573	W491 WGH	Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President - stored at CN then sold to a private buyer by 2 August.
	YN57 FYM	Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka - ex B&H. Confirming last month's report, this was rejected at Clacton on arrival, but it has not returned to Brighton, instead it is being cannibalised at CN.

Also withdrawn - Ford Transit Ancillary vehicle EJ57 PXY.

Significant Allocations

528	CN - KN	by week commencing 23 June - still active at KN until 10 August then to CN.
530-2		Tend to operate from HD (see notes on 531 below).
533-5		Tend to operate from KN.
536-9		Tend to operate from CN. All are subject to engineering transfers.
832	CN - KN	by week commencing 21 July.
874	SY - KN	by week commencing 4 August.

Fleet News

Two more Dart Pointer SLFs original to Heddingham Omnibuses were removed from Clacton depot for scrap on 7 August, 256 (EU55 BWC) on a transporter and 258 (EU56 FLN) on suspended tow. 258 was the only one of the 56-reg batch to be repainted in the new livery. Both had been lightly cannibalised for spares before departure. 531 (LX59 DCF) was involved in an accident on 6 August, it was working route 89 from Great Yeldham to Braintree and was just outside Halstead, approaching the town, when it was struck by a hay bale. The front of the bus was damaged. 531 was stranded for 12 hours but was recovered to Clacton engineering yard for assessment the following day. It returned to service on 10 August and was used on services 11/14 the following week.

On 9 August, ex Go North West Enviro 200 251 (YX13 EFY) returned to CN after refurbishment at Hants & Dorset Trim with 250 (LX13 CZF) also completed. Both were treated to a full internal refurbishment of seats, retrimming in Go Ahead blue, a full panel straighten and full repaint. They are the first couple from the four acquired earlier this year to be so treated. These have red headlight surrounds as opposed to silver which makes them stand out, although general opinion amongst enthusiasts seem to prefer the silver finish. 250, at least, has the older 'heddingham' fleet names rather than the more recent 'heddingham & chambers' ones.

Other News

ECC contract service gains 11, 14, 80/A, 81/A and 82/A are worked by Clacton depot, with service 83 being shared between Kelvedon & Sible Heddingham. Paper labels were used on 80/1/2/3 series routes on the first day of operation but destination equipment appeared to have been reprogrammed quickly where possible, except 260 (EU56 FLR) was spotted on 5 August still working the 81A with "Heddingham & Chambers" on the front and "h&c" on the rear, no labels at all, but by 8 August was on 14 with paper labels in windscreen. 277 (YX57 BXE) was seen also on 8 August with paper labels running the 81/A routes. Vehicles working the early 11 seem to work the 14 (ex-First service 4) and return to the 11 for the return commuter journeys in the evening. One of the 14 early vehicles works onto the 81/As and one day saw the removal of a vehicle back to Clacton and replaced, but this may have been an engineering move.

Service 1 open top operation using 502 (LF52 ZNE) has started the intense timetable of summer holidays. Patronage appears to have improved compared to last year's route, with reasonable peak loads seen on 5 August. The timetable allows a 10 minute layover in Pier Avenue to recruit riders, and the bus then heads out west to Martello Tower via the old Butlin's campsite and circles round back along Marine Parade West past the pier and then fully along Marine Parade East before circling around the Holland roundabout and returning along the seafront, diverting to the station via Carnarvon Road and then via Station Road back to Pier Avenue. The route is aimed purely at tourists and day trippers, and locals (although it is part of the Clacton Rocks day ticket) do not appear to use the service.

New timetables in printed form are now available on the buses, Tendring District, which includes all Clacton services plus the new Colchester City services including the relatively new 70, plus ex Panther routes in Harwich. Strangely one omission is the 105/7 timetable. This book is full colour, picks out late night and weekend services in different colours and lays out the timetables in full in ascending numerical order rather than geographic location, which makes it quick to use. Chambers have a new fold out double-sided broadsheet format which details all services including the rural infrequent services to Bury St Edmunds, the additional services as described last month on route 84, Sunday services between Sudbury and Bury and the new 90 service to Hadleigh.

Withdrawn 573 Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President (W491 WGH) attended the Big Bus Show at Stonham Barns on 11 August in full Hedingham livery minus fleet numbers, as a privately preserved vehicle. It attended the rally in convoy together with an ex-London Transport Leyland Titan, CUL 96V.

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

Below: In EBM 720 we reported on the introduction of new Hedingham route 70 (Colchester Bus Station - Marks Tey, Domsey Bank), every 30 minutes on M-F between school hours, which reintroduced a more frequent daytime service to Marks Tey Estate and introduced a service to Stanway Stane Retail Park. Enviro 200 261 (EY57 FZE) is seen on the route in Colchester High Street on 7 August 2024. **David Moth**





Services

Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 223 (CC04 GAL) in 'H is for Hertford livery' was a surprise on Central Connect Harlow Sunday services gained from Arriva on the first day, 28 July 2024. The destination screen was rather awry - for service 2 the nearest it got was '2X Loughborough', as seen **above** in Harlow Bus Station, whilst in the afternoon there was confusion when Rettendon Common was shown as destination for Harlow local service 8!

Owen Woodliffe. This bus was also seen on route 5 on 5 August, and, on the same day, mini Enviro 200 MMC 353, in the same livery, was on route 20.

Enviro 200 MMCs 322 and 325 were operating on route 20 on its first day, 28 July, but both were still displaying the old route number 420.

For Harlow area services, generally Mercedes-Benz minibuses are used on routes 5, 24 & 31 and evening / Sunday services, and Enviro 200 MMCs on all other routes, but there are exceptions to this.

New Vehicles

E20D / Enviro 400 MMCs 502/3 (YX24 PLU/V) seen at Stansted Depot on 21 August. More details next month.

Withdrawn Vehicles

Enviro 200s 921-928 are reportedly all now withdrawn from service following the purchase of the new mini Enviro 200 MMCs 357-371 reported in EBM 723. (A photo of 925 is on page 32.) This eliminates the temporary fleet number sequence 910-928 that was introduced for StreetLites and Enviro 200s acquired by Vectare with the Central Connect business which were not expected to have much time in use after the takeover (details in EBM 718). Flagfinders Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka YN53 YRD has moved to sister company Simonds.

With thanks to John Card, Owen Woodliffe and LOTS.

Opposite Page top: Central Connect route 420 was renumbered 20 from the 28 July changes, with an increase in frequency. New mini Enviro 200 MMC 368 (YY24 HBN) is at Ongar Two Brewers on 7 August. **Robert Downton**

Opposite Page bottom: Information from Flagfinders about the DaRT 299 service which they took over from Arrow Taxis from the 28 July changes (details in 'Service Revisions' in EBM 723). This was a normal contract win, but, as reported in 'Service Revisions' above, DaRT 3 has also now been taken over following Arrow Taxis ceasing trading.



Flagfinders operate the DaRT 299 flexible bus service on behalf of Essex County Council.

DaRT flexible bus services operate in north Essex, connecting a range of rural communities to local towns and facilitating access to employment, leisure, shopping and medical care. DaRT services are operated under the Central Connect brand, under contract to Essex County Council, who financially support the services.

DaRT 299 serves north-west Essex, taking passengers to Saffron Walden, Braintree, Bishop's Stortford and Haverhill town centres, and also healthcare facilities in Saffron Walden, Haverhill and Braintree.

To make a booking please call the DaRT booking centre on 0115 777 3187. Alternatively, please email dart@central-connect.co.uk to request a booking. Please note that email bookings are not confirmed until you receive a response from the DaRT booking centre, as all DaRT bookings are subject to availability.

GET A QUOTE



Colchester

Acquired

3730 (YJ57 BRF), a VDL SB200, Wrightbus Pulsar B44F, was received on 27 July 2024 from Aylesbury depot (Arriva The Shires) but has not entered service and may not now do so. Instead, similar 3761 (YJ08 DZM) was received from Southend on 3 August. It is seen **below** on route 1 at the bus station on 6 August, still with arrivabus.co.uk/southend on the cove panels at the rear. **Robert Appleton**



3010/2 (BJ12 YPV/X), Mercedes-Benz Citaro B41F, were received from High Wycombe depot (Arriva The Shires) around the end of July; 3010 was then moved to Southend for repairs on 6 August. Neither have yet entered service. It is understood that up to seven Citaros are due for Colchester.

Withdrawn

Enviro 200 4019 (GN58 BUF) is withdrawn and has moved to Maidstone for onward scrapping.

Wrightbus StreetLites 4323 (SK68 TWU) and 4262 (GN64 DXS) were transferred to Northfleet late July and 7 August respectively.

Southend

VDL SB200 3761 was not withdrawn at the end of July as had been expected in last month's notes but remained in service here for a couple more days until 2 August, when it went to Colchester (as noted above).

Harlow

Acquired Vehicles

4106/8 (SN17 MXE/G), ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMC 11.5m, B45F.

From Arriva Kent & Surrey at Tunbridge Wells. 4106 first seen, but broken down, on 5 August 2024 and not seen since. 4108 first seen the next day and has been used mainly on routes 508-510.

Vehicles on Loan

Optare Versa 4215 (KX61 KGN) from Ware, 29 July - 7 August There was an increase in PVR on routes 508-510 from 29th so presumably this was to cover prior to the two acquisitions reported above. However, from 16 August Enviro 200 MMCs 4084 and 4096 went on loan to Ware for route 310, leaving a shortage of vehicles on the 508-510.

Repaint

VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsar 2 3771 (FL63 DXB), which only received new Green Line livery in December 2022, has been repainted into standard Arriva blue livery.

With thanks to Robert Appleton, John Card, Nigel Clark, Matthew Evans, Adam Kelleher, Mark Lloyd and Keith Sadler.



Ian Ransom



Two photos from the last day of Panther Travel operations on 27 July 2024, both on route 2 on the B1352 Main Road, Harwich by Cliff Park **Above:** former Eastern National Leyland National 1924 (JHJ 150V) with Adam Barham driving. **Right:** Enviro 200 VB08 PAN, now, as reported last month, named "Adam and Diane" (beneath the fleet name). Both **Stephen Barham**

Disposal

Scania K360 / Plaxton AB61 PAN (ex OF61 OXF) was sold to Roman Coaches, Colchester June 2024.

With thanks to Adam Barham.

Vehicle News

The final two ADL E40D / Enviro 400 MMCs (804/5) were due to be delivered as we went to press; further details and the registration of already delivered 803 will follow next month.

Scania N230 / ADL Enviro 400 613 (SN15 ETF) has been repainted into SoE colours, retrimmed and refurbished.

Former Nottingham E20D / Enviro 200s 494 (YX63 KFJ) and 496 (YX63 LHU) have now been repainted into Stephenson's fleet livery (ex-Nottingham blue and grey).

The following have been purchased from the administrators of Arrow Taxis. Most (if not all) are for resale.
Mercedes Vito AV64 DTF (non-PSV).

Mercedes Sprinter 516 CDI with EVM body 16 seat (+6 standing): AY17 UVL, AY17 UVM, AY67 PXM, AY67 PXN (see photo opposite page), RX67 OPU.

Former Eastern National Bristol VR / ECW 3129 (XHK 234X) has been repainted into 1986 Eastern National 'City Bus' livery, as illustrated on the front cover and page 15. This bus was acquired by Stephenson's in 2019. More details on page 1.

Services

Following the collapse of Arrow Taxis / Essex & Suffolk Dart, NIBS, as the next lowest tenderer, were awarded the ECC contract for route 45 (a new service, Bradwell to South Woodham, replacing the former D4 & D5). Operation of the 45 started on 29 July, running free until the registration was accepted, initially using a Stephenson's bus from Maldon depot, as seen **below**, mini Enviro 200 427 (YY15 NJO) in Burnham-on-Crouch on 2 August. **Dave Arnold**.

There has been some confusion over the timetable for the 45, as Arrow had agreed a revised timetable after the initial tender award was made, but the NIBS bid had been on the basis of the original timetable, not the revised version, hence the original version is currently operating.



In addition, Stephenson's have been awarded former Arrow service 99A, renumbered to 99 and with an amended timetable, on a three month temporary contract starting Wednesday 28 August.

Below: AY67 PXN when with Arrow on route 10 at Chelmsford Bus Station on 12 February 2018. This route has recently passed to Central Connect, renumbered 48. **Adam Kelleher**



Below: Back in June this year, NIBS Scania N270UD / East Lancs Olympus 513 (YN08 OCR) was unusually on loan to Stephenson's. It is seen operating the first evening journey on service 17 on 17th at Leigh Station. It was not that the LED blind display did not come out in the photo (as sometimes happens with LED displays) it was that the blind box has been removed from the bus! Possibly the first time ever that a NIBS bus has been on local service in Leigh. **John G Lidstone**



NIBS Buses Takeover of Brentwood

Adam Kelleher

NIBS Buses have operated various commercial school services to & from Brentwood for many years now, and also rail replacment services, but they first started operating non-school stage services in the town as recently as 17 June 2019 when they took over the Ensignbus Monday - Saturday routes 21 (Brentwood Station - Ongar), 31 (Brentwood Station - Bishop's Hall Estate) and 81 (Brentwood Station - Hutton). They had an early setback when the 31 (which duplicated First Essex 37) ceased at the start of the 2020 Covid lockdown and did not return.

However, since then they have added ECC contract services 269 (Brentwood High Street - Grays) and 565 (Brentwood Station - Herongate / Bulphan) and from 29 July this year, 61 (Brentwood High Street - Blackmore) gained from Vectare and 71/72 (Brentwood Station - Stondon Massey) from Hedingham, also ECC contracts.

They now have a near monopoly of Brentwood Borough local services on Mondays to Saturdays (they do not operate in the town on Sundays). The only M-S routes they don't operate are the aforementioned First Essex 37 (Warley - Bishop's Hall Estate) and 9 (Brentwood - Basildon, which acts as a local service around the East Ham Estate). First Essex also operate the 351 (Warley - Chelmsford) and Stagecoach London operate TfL service 498 (Brentwood - Romford, Queen's Hospital).

This brings back memories of another local independent, City Coach Company (1928-1952), which eventually had a near monopoly of Brentwood routes during the 1945-52 period (before they sold out to the BTC / Westcliff).



Above: Ex Abellio London Enviro 200 449 (YX10 FFK), converted from dual to single door layout and repainted all white, was acquired for the Brentwood routes, and is seen on the first day, 17 June 2019, at Brentwood Station on route 81. However, soon afterwards it transferred to Stephensons, still in all white but with their fleet names, before later receiving full Stephensons livery. First Essex Dart / Pointer 42945 (WA56 OAV) behind is on route 565 now also run by NIBS whereas Enviro 200 44539 (YX13 AHO) is on route 37, now the only pure local route operated in Brentwood by First Essex on Mondays to Saturdays. 44539 and sister 44540 had been repainted and branded for route 37 as it was in competition with Ensignbus, and from this date, NIBS, route 31.





Above & Bottom of Previous Page: NBS took over routes 71/72 to Stondon Massey from Hedingham from 29 July 2024, but for many years these routes were operated by sister company Stephensons. Optare Solo 324 (EU07 FVO) is parked in The Parade, alongside Platform 4 at Brentwood Station, on 2 April 2013. These days, many NBS vehicles park there in between duties and an Enviro 200 is seen in the above photo having left there and turning out of King Edward Road into King's Road to go Brentwood High Street to take up service on route 269 to Grays. The main subject of the photo, again on route 72, is mini Enviro 200 418 (MX59 AVN). 9 August 2024.

Below: Another former Abellio London Enviro 200 acquired in 2019, 447 (YX10 FFE), on another recently acquired route, 61 to Blackmore, in Brentwood High Street, also on 9 August. In the background is ex Go-Ahead London Scania N230UD / OmniCity 525 (LX08 ECN), also converted from dual to single door, on one of the original NBS Brentwood routes, the 81. All photos **Adam Kelleher**



Acme Bus, Widdington

YN53 YHA, an Optare Solo M850 (B29F), is here from Mulleys, Ixworth, Suffolk.

Anita, Stansted Airport

Mercedes-Benz Tourismo ET22 JUW (ex-MP22 SBC) has been re-registered as AC22 ERN.

Barker, Roydon

H3 GKN (ex-MR05 FEN), a Van Hool T917 C48F integral, is here from City Travel, Keighley, West Yorkshire.

Peter Godward, Basildon

Yutong BH16 ACH, C32FT, is here from Rigby's, Blackburn, Lancashire.

Kelly's Travel, Nazeing

BF23 CFO, a Mercedes-Benz Tourismo C53FLT, arrived here in March from Grange Travel, Gravesend, Kent via the Daimler Bus dealership in Coventry.

Kevendy, Wickford

Volvo B10M-62, registration P7 OPC (ex-P854 YWV) with Van Hool C44FLT body, is here from Middleton (Marc 1), Billericay.

Prestige Coaches, Burnham-on-Crouch

The recent application for an Operator's Licence has been refused, reason currently not known.

With thanks to the PSV Circle.

Below: Swift Travel, North Weald Setra S415GT-HD BU06 CUJ parked in the car park of a retail park near Wembley Stadium on 10 August 2024 for the Community Shield match between Manchester City and Manchester United. This coach was new to Crosskeys, Folkestone and was acquired from them early last year. **Allan White**



Route 549 & Loughton Miscellany Andrew Colebourne

Previous reports of route 549 since Sullivans took over the route from Stagecoach London on 12 March 2022 were in EBM 696, 698, 703 & 708. All photos by **the author**.

As reported in 'Service Revisions' above, Sullivan Buses suddenly withdrew from all its TfL contracts, including route 549, after service on Friday 2 August 2024. Enviro 200 MMC AE26 (WW66 SUL) was the bus used on Sullivans' last day. Since mid-June 2024, Enviro 200 AE14 (KS61 SUL) had also become commonly allocated.

On the day after Sullivans withdrawal the route did not run. This is based on my observations around the time of the 1039 arrival / 1100 departure and around the 1700 departure time at South Woodford. However, on Monday 5th, Stagecoach was back operating the 549, once more from West Ham (WH) garage with an Enviro 200 and using the same 655 duty number as it had done before the contract passed to Sullivans. 36298 (LX11 AXS) was the bus used, making its debut on the service. It was also in use the following day. On the 9th, Stagecoach London's oldest vehicle, 36037 (SN57 DWE), was on the route and it continued to appear until the 13th at least. (As a single-door mini Enviro 200 I think it is a type not seen on the route before. It was previously CT Plus / HCT Group DAS1, renumbered 1300 in 2020. Photos of 36037 are on the inside rear cover). At this time the bus on the 549 was not tracking but when that restarted on 17 August it was 36298 again and it remained allocated the following week.

Route 549 had started as an Essex County Council contract service, hence the 5xx sequence route number, before TfL took over. It celebrated its 21st birthday as a TfL route on 30 August 2024, although it won't last beyond 21 years and a week. From 7 September, TfL service revisions will see the 549 incorporated into a revised W14 (Loughton - Whipps Cross Hospital), including a frequency increase (549 was every 90 minutes, revised W14 will be every 60 minutes) and a Sunday service. Stagecoach will work W14 using two buses from Lea Interchange (LI) garage. The contract calls for new electric vehicles but it remains to be seen whether they will be ready at the start.

I don't know how many times I've passed the particular bus stop in my photo **below**, taken on 13 July 2024, but I only recently realised (or perhaps I had forgotten) that the flag has a pair of incorrect route number E-tiles, one each side. This stop is called The Crown. It is located about 20m along the High Road, Loughton, south west of the



junction with Old Station Road. The Crown was a public house, now long gone, on the east side of the High Road immediately north of the junction. From the early days of motor buses and for many years it was the main terminal point for buses in Loughton. The current bus stop in Old Station Road near the Fire Station is also called The Crown.

The incorrect E-tiles are the '542 Monday-Saturday' ones, which should be '549 Monday-Saturday'. The 542 (and 542A) were the Loughton circulars that serve Old Station Road but not this stop and they never have done. Fifteen days after the photo was taken the 542/A were renumbered 17/A. Incidentally, the timetable for the recently withdrawn NIBS school bus service 804 is at the bottom of the panel in the picture. The bus is Stagecoach 12546 (YX19 ORY), an ADL E40H / Enviro 400 City, on route 20. The bus shelter here is one provided by Essex County Council, complete with the roof mounted board which would usually display the bus stop flag.

Below: Also on 13 July, I photographed Central Connect Enviro 200 925 (ML62 OGY) on the 542A at High Road, Loughton. Just visible above the front wheelarch is an 'STN' (for Stansted) depot code, and towards the rear the vehicle carries its old Central Connect fleet number of 1417. This bus is now likely withdrawn (see page 22).



Meanwhile, Stagecoach has plans to save money by moving out of West Ham (WH) garage, which is leased from TfL and was a 'landmark' development by them. Lea Interchange will pick up a lot of the work, but other reallocations are also planned, including moving route 20 out of Walthamstow Avenue (AW) into Leyton (T).

For the first six months of 2024, apart from the peak hour extras when there were problems on the Central line (as reported in EBM 719 & 720), route 20 has been exclusively run using its intended buses, the 19-registered Enviro 400 City hybrid vehicles 12539-47 plus similar ex CT Plus / HCT 12548/9 (E17/20 HCT) and the electric pair 84173/4 (LG21 LZM/N). In itself, that is quite unusual, but it came to an end on 18 July when 12538 (SN65 OHP) appeared, and it continues to appear on the route regularly, still displaying its Ash Grove (HK) depot code. SN65 OHP is significant as it was the original Alexander Dennis London E40H / Enviro 400 City demonstrator, subsequently bought by CT Plus / HCT and given the next available fleet number after the later vehicles they had at the time. What the move to Leyton will mean for the currently allocated vehicles remains to be seen, I'm not aware of any arrangements being made at Leyton for the two electric vehicles, so I'm sure they will cease to appear for now at least. Whatever happens, I think it likely there will be the opportunity for more vehicle variety to appear on the service.





36037 (SN57 DWE) on route 549. **Above:** With Arriva Kent Thameside 6490 (YY16 YLA) behind on route 66 in Old Station Road, Loughton on 13 August 2024. The E-tiles on the stop flag here had been updated to show the Sunday only 16C, but the 418/418B and 542A tiles still needed to be changed to 17A and 18/18C. Close up photo on previous page.

Below: Later the same day in Victoria Road, Buckhurst Hill, having just left the station. At the rear it still displays the stuck on 593, the number of a temporary route put in place during bridge replacement works at Highbury & Islington back in 2017!



