

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 696 April 2022



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



fb.me/essexbus





Above: First Essex's Westway, Chelmsford, depot at night, 30 March 2022. Amongst the standard liveried buses are 69431 in green, 67189 in black and at the rear on left of photo, one of the recently acquired ex-First Glasgow Enviro 400 MMCs (see page 14).

Lee Best

Front Cover: To mark their Golden Jubilee Ensignbus have painted Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 130 (LX15 GPY) in this special livery. At the South East Bus Festival, Kent Showground, Detling, on 2 April 2022. **Chris Stewart.** See also rear cover.

Inside Front Cover: Rare Bedford MLC FJT 86 at Lodge's depot on 3 February 2022. Details of this bus (where the incorrect registration of FIT was included, apologies for this) were in last month's EBM.

John Wakefield

Right: Close-up of the front grille and depot, fleet number and registration plates of Eastern National MW6G / ECW coach BNO 116B when new.

Bob Beaumont

More on this vehicle, including two more photos, on pages 6 and 8.



Group Information

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Service Changes

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For the time being these can also be sent to:
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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
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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
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contributions in full, in part or not at all and cannot guarantee
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The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 7th
and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the
next month.

Views expressed in EBM do not necessarily reflect the opinions
of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group or members of its
Committee. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy, but the
Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors published.

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Group Notices

Membership News

Welcome to New Member Andrew Lloyd, Laindon - 1193

We are very sorry to report three deaths this month. Condolences are offered to friends and family.

Chris Nelson, formerly of Nelson Coaches and NIBS, in February. A tribute to her is on the next two pages.

Member Michael Parsons, a Canadian resident and one-time conductor and driver for Eastern National at Wood Green on the 251.

Les Stitson, a stalwart of LOTS as well as an EBEG member, in March.

Service Revisions Sub-Editor

Unfortunately there has been no response to the appeal for someone to take over this post from Paul Harvey. The Chair of the Group, Ian Ransom, has kindly stepped into this role in order to keep it going. He is grateful for Paul's assistance in preparing this month's report.

The Running Card by Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

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

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

Sunday 1 May: King Alfred Running Day, Winchester.

Sunday 1 May: 50th Ipswich to Felixstowe Vehicle Run. Departs Christchurch Park 1100, display on Felixstowe Promenade during afternoon.

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.

Sunday 22 May: Didcot Transport Rally & Vintage Road Run.

Sunday 29 May: 50 Years of East Anglian Transport Museum. Carlton Colville.

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 OAS. 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

Omnibus Society tour celebrating 90 years of Eastern National, using former EN Bristol MW coach 7017 HK. Further to EBM 695, date confirmed as Saturday 11 June. Pick-up times at Tilbury Ferry (0910), Grays Bus Station (0925), Laindon Railway Station (1015) and Chelmsford Railway Station (Victoria Road) (1055), the tour will recreate parts of the major cross-Essex routes 51/53 and 19/19A. It will return via Southend and Chelmsford. Return via Southend (Travel Centre) at 1450 and Chelmsford at 1550. 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.

Southend to Brighton Trip

On Sunday 14 August 14 Matthew Evans is running a day trip from the Southend area to Brighton for bus staff and enthusiasts and their families, using an Ensign BCL tri-axle double decker. Leaving Southend at 0800, pick-ups can be arranged on the line of route. Return from Brighton c.1700. Fare just £15 each with possible discount for family groups. To book please text Matthew on 07746 779 414 as soon as possible.

City of Southend Area Bus User Group. 21st Anniversary 2001-2022

The group looks after the interests of bus users in Southend-on-Sea Borough, Castle Point and Rochford District. Members receive two newsletters each year and there is an AGM attended by local bus operators, this year on Saturday 3 September 2022 at 1030, at Salvation Army, Southend. Facebook page & Website <https://yelluk.wixsite.com/sabug>. Membership costs £4.00 for one year or £10.00 for three years. If you are interested, for a membership form, please e-mail greig.gordon49@sky.com

Chris (Dorothy Christine) Nelson 17 November 1943-23 February 2022

A Tribute by Chris Stewart

Chris Nelson was born in the Newcastle suburb of Gosforth and educated locally, showing early prowess and winning a scholarship to the independent Dame Allan's School. The Nelson family were friends of her older brother and she married Bill on her 19th birthday. Their daughter Brenda was born the following year, but within six months Bill's work as an electrical engineer led them to Essex and, after a cold winter in Maylandsea, they settled in a new house in Wickford. Their second child, Paul, was born in 1965 but tragically died of leukaemia at the age of three, when Chris was expecting son Steve. Having suffered this and a house fire after which their insurance company went bankrupt, her doctor advised her to find something to occupy herself - possibly not anticipating that this would involve starting a coach company! Bill borrowed a vehicle from Broadway Coaches on which to take a PSV test and they bought Ford Thames 570E / Burlingham 712 ENM from Norman Reed of Ferrers Coaches, having agreed to pay £1,000 for it after 12 months. This vehicle, which had been new to Ronsway of Hemel Hempstead in 1961, is seen below in Scotland. Note the 'Nelsons Coaches' name in the blind box in the bumper. **Bill Nelson.** The poster on the right features five Fords of which three had been bought new (DAA 964K, an R226/Duple new to George Weston of Wickford in 1971, LTW640P and UPU 526R, both R1114 / Plaxtons, new in 1975 and 1977 respectively, ATW 584L an R1014 new in 1973 and R192/Duple RTM 563J which was originally with Trueman of Bagshot).

Nelson Coaches was formed on 1 February 1969, Chris having also passed her PSV test as well as setting about the coach, cleaning and painting it before it could be put to work - initially using hired drivers during the week before Bill left his job to drive full time. As a baby, Steve regularly travelled in a Moses basket on the dished tray over the engine cover when Chris was driving!



NELSON

LUXURY COACHES - ECONOMY PRICES

Telephone: Wickford 4084



Chris and Bill had already formed many connections with other local young families and in running the local Methodist Association Youth Club (having been involved back in Newcastle) and their principal initial work was for the Girls' Brigade, week after week carrying 30 girls and full self-catering kit to all parts of the UK. A chance conversation on one of these trips led to further work for the Essex & Suffolk Covenanters, including nine-day tours to Devon. Business (and the coach fleet) grew from there and the early 1970s were very good for them.

Son Dudley was born in 1972, but despite the demands of three young children and running a coach company (now with the aid of a part time office / general assistant) Chris decided in 1975 to also embark on an Open University Degree, the first of two she gained. This prompted her to move into an academic career, progressing in due course to become Head of Maths and IT at Fryerns School in Basildon, even then becoming an OU tutor for 11 years after retirement. The demands of this work were such that she persuaded Bill to let her take a step back from Nelson Coaches in 1980, by which time the business was also changing dramatically - NIBS (Nelsons Independent Bus Service) had been formed in 1979 in response to a downturn in coaching work during the late 1970s.

NIBS' initial school services were a direct result of Bill and Chris's investigations into schooling for son Steve, for which they'd settled on St Martin's in Hutton. Between them they analysed all the school performance information and put together possible routes from areas of low school standards to those with higher achievements. One advert in the paper floating the idea led to 250 telephone calls and the inauguration of the first NIBS school route. 36 children were carried on a Leyland Leopard on the first day, a duplicate being required within two weeks and within six weeks double-deckers were being bought. NIBS rapidly evolved as a bus (rather than coach) operator and son Steve took it over in 2001, eventually selling it to the owners of Stephensons in 2018.

Chris had remained as a director until 1997, providing solid support to Bill and Steve, but alongside all of this she was heavily involved over the years in Round Table, Ladies Circle, Rotary, Inner Wheel, the Samaritans (where she volunteered for several years), Rock Choir and bee-keeping, not to mention boating adventures with Bill over 40 years, and of course her family. The Group extends its sincere condolences to Bill, Steve and the family.

With acknowledgement to the Nelson family for most of the above, including some notes from a talk by Bill to the Group in 2002.

Below: Steve, Chris and Bill Nelson photographed on 8 October 2018, marking the passing of NIBS Buses from their family ownership to the parent group of Stephensons. **Bill Hiron**



Letters

We have been delighted by the positive feedback on **Essex Bus Magazine Extra Issue 1**, for which many thanks.

Alan Osborne, Group Secretary & Founder, from Seven Kings

I have just received the first issue of Essex Bus Magazine Extra, a very fitting tribute to my 80th birthday.

The range of articles is excellent and the whole production is first class, well done Adam. It was nice to produce the Halls Coaches article, following a plea from Peter Carr for more on this operator, and to see it in print.

I particularly enjoyed the feature by Robert Appleton on Manningtree level crossing which included the view of school bus route 693. This reminded me of my own school days, when I travelled by 691 trolleybus from my home off Ilford Lane to the Beal Grammar School in Ley Street which was almost opposite the Ilford (ID) depot, home of the South African collection of trolleys. The best day of the school week was Thursday when I instead went to the school annexe in Woodford Bridge Road. This meant that I could catch any trolley to Ilford Broadway, a 693 going to Chadwell Heath if it came first. It was then a bus ride (144) from Cranbrook Road to Gants Hill and then along the Eastern Avenue where Bristol LDs on the 251 could be seen.

For me, the most interesting piece was that from Richard Delahoy which included the internal memo (which I have never seen before) about the renumbering of the Westcliff-on-Sea services into a 200 series as part of the Eastern National scheme and the reasons why it was not implemented. It's amazing what comes to light after such a long period!

So congratulations on EBM Extra 1, I am sure all of the membership will now be looking forward to issue 2.

Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit from Cornwall

I was delighted to receive my copy of the Extra magazine, taking me back to my early days of 'bus spotting'. I was particularly interested in the article about Manningtree railway crossing. Firstly, may I point out that Bob Beaumont's picture was taken during the last week of LWL operations from Colchester, but not on the last day. The Colchester PSV Circle, under the organisation of Geoff Mills, had hired 1139 for an evening tour of the area, including Manningtree bridge. The blinds were altered from PRIVATE at every photo opportunity, so, despite having the correct destination for 87A, it was not actually in service. Bob, Terry Smith, Peter Stobart and I had travelled directly from Eastern National's head office after work, and all needed to catch buses home, so the tour had to finish abruptly.

The article reminded me of a few minutes of sheer panic. On one occasion, I was on a day excursion with Bristol MW6G 39 seat coach 366 (BNO 116B). Why I had chosen to go via Manningtree I can't recall. However I was confronted by the infamous gates, as 366 was too tall for the bridge. The procedure was as follows. The gate was locked, but could be remotely unbolted from the signal box. I then had to open, manually, the gate, run across the tracks, open the far gate, and run back to the coach. Then I drove across and having cleared the gate, run back to shut the first gate, then run back again and shut the other gate, so that the signalman could lock them. All of the time my neck was swivelling to and fro for the merest hint of an approaching train. By the time that I got back to 366 I was breathless, either from the physical effort, or from the fear of being hit by a train, but managed to exude an air of professionalism, as if it was an everyday occurrence. I never tried it again.

Two photos of 366 (but neither with that fleet number!) are on page 7. However, **Chris Stewart** owns ones of its fleet number plates.



Robert Appleton from Kirby Cross

The post came this morning with a great present for me, EBM Extra Issue 1. A splendid issue. The maps, timetables, photos etc. have all reproduced very well. Thank you for all the work you have done on this magazine.

I have started reading the Halls Coaches of Hatfield Heath article. That must have been a labour of love for Alan Osborne, needing a lot of research. An interesting route, market day only, and cross border from Essex to Bishops Stortford in Hertfordshire.

Plenty for me to read about the Southend area, and in contrast a more modern subject with the First Essex Scotland Connections.

It is great to see my Manningtree Railway Bridge & Level Crossing article in print. It was an excellent idea to contrast Eastern Counties and Eastern National Leyland Nationals on the rear cover. Unfortunately LN599 has a bent front bumper, and the offside NBC symbol has lost its white background. I don't think that Eastern Counties added "Clacton" to the destination blinds when service 123 restarted on 15 June 1981. They relied on a slip board in the front nearside windscreen as shown by VR204 and LN599. Not all the Clacton allocated Leyland Nationals had Ipswich added to their destination blinds for service 123. Some had a white slip board in the front nearside windscreen displaying "Ipswich". It looks as if 1825 has had to stop on double yellow lines, the normal bus stop was behind 1825, it looks to be occupied by a white delivery lorry.

Studying my own photos brings back a lot of memories. Thanks again for a splendid magazine.

Without wishing to blow our own trumpets too much (!) some **further comments...**

"Congratulations on Issue 1 of the EBM Extra. It is a good read". Keith Shayshutt

"A very good magazine. A wonderful gesture from Alan". David Reynolds

"It is an excellent publication, and the articles are of real interest to me as an incomer only having worked in Essex since 2005. I find historical features really interesting to explain how we got to where we are today. Congratulations to the team for making this publication possible, and to such a high standard". John Pope

"Most impressive". Michael Dryhurst

"I have enjoyed reading the new extra magazine, a credit to all involved and thank you to Alan to enable it to happen." Alan Moore

"My article was very nicely laid out with some well-chosen photos to complete things". John Bath

"I must congratulate you on the Extra, what an excellent publication. An interesting mix of material, I thoroughly enjoyed it. Thanks to Alan for his support. Without Alan's drive EBEG (or ENEG) would not exist so in thanking him I also would like to wish him all the best in reaching his splendid birthday". David Grimmett

"Fantastic". Terry Wiffen.

"EBM extra is very good". Chris Stewart

"I have received my copy, I am delighted not just by this but by the very professional way all the magazines are presented, I am very glad I decided to join the Group about a year ago". Andrew Longhurst

We are also delighted to say that another member has come forward to sponsor an issue, so we now have funding in place for Extra 2 (Autumn 2022) and two issues in 2023 (Spring & Autumn).

Finally, a letter related to EBM 695:

Roger A Smith from Witham

Further to the interesting articles regarding Setright ticket machines, as used by Eastern National, on the majority of them the machine number, situated to the right of the ticket, began with an 'E', presumably for Eastern National. Some, however, began with 'H' which I assume were former Hicks Bros. machines. Moores of Kelvedon used a different type of Setright machine whereby a card ticket was inserted into a slot on the front of the machine for the relevant information to be printed. I seem to remember Osborne's of Tollesbury using Bell Punch machines, but I might be wrong there.

Next page: The coach mentioned in Tebzy's letter. Top: It seen with its original fleet number 600. **Bob Beaumont**. It was new in March 1964 as C39F and was the penultimate single-decker delivered before the August 1964 renumbering, so there was only one higher number in the 1954 single-decker scheme, sister 601, BNO 117B. The photo is taken between April and early August 1964. Does anyone recognise the gentleman and the location? Bottom: In November 1974 it was converted to a bus at Marshalls, Cambridge and renumbered 1446, re-seated to B43F. This photo, taken at Brentwood Garage, was taken soon afterwards. **Chris Baggs**

Eastern National Bristol MW6G / ECW BNO 116B



Government Funding and ECC Initiatives

Continuation but also ending of Covid Support

Grant Shapps, the Secretary of State for Transport made the following announcement on 1 March 2022:

"As the sector continues to deal with the ongoing effects of the pandemic and the emergence of new travel patterns, the financial challenges faced by the bus and light rail sector remain. The department recognises the importance local transport services have to the people and economies of the areas they serve and understands that the removal of funding now would create a 'cliff edge' with the prospect of overnight reductions in services. Such an outcome would undermine our aspirations set out in the 'National Bus Strategy' and 'Levelling Up' white papers to improve transport connectivity.

"I can therefore announce that we will provide over £150 million in further financial support to the local transport sector. This will fund bus operators and local authorities responsible for bus and light rail services from April until October 2022 and is the final Covid-19 support package the government will provide to the sector. The funding will assist local transport authorities and operators in running services as they develop new, effective, financially sustainable networks that cater for the needs of the local public and their local areas after the pandemic." In practice, the final 'Bus Recovery Grant' funding runs to 20 September, not quite to October.

Bus Service Improvement Plans

Details of 'Bus Service Improvement Plans' were in EBM 688 and 692 (August and December 2021). The latter laid out plans and bids from Essex, Southend and Thurrock councils. The Department for Transport announced initial allocations of funds to Local Transport Authorities on 4 April, totalling £1.1 billion, accounting for all the funds thought to be available (which has been whittled down by various other 'diversions' from the original £3bn to the £2bn reported in EBM 692 to this amount). Many authorities' bids across the country were rejected, unfortunately including all of our local ones. Successful bids in East Anglia and the Home Counties were £49.6m for Norfolk, £29.7m for Hertfordshire and £35.1m for Kent.

New Sustainable Travel App for Essex Launched

A free-to-use sustainable journey planner, the new TravelEssex app, helps people in Essex to plan their journeys and travel by foot, bike, bus and train anywhere in the county. Providing real-time travel information, users are given detailed expected journey and departure times for walking and cycling routes as well as bus services, including First, Arriva, Hedingham, and Stephenson's, as well as Greater Anglia and c2c rail, National Rail and London Underground trains.

To download the TravelEssex app, search for it on the Google Play or Apple app stores. For more information visit www.travelessex.co.uk.

Introducing DigiGo - Travel on Demand

DigiGo is a fully electric shared public transport service which offers on-demand or pre-bookable travel in Central Essex and South Braintree. There is no fixed route or timetable, which puts you in control of your journey. DigiGo is booked through the TravelEssex journey planning app, simply:

Book - Select your pick-up and drop-off points within our operational areas and pay on the app.

Track - Watch on your smartphone as your designated vehicle makes its way to you in real-time.

Ride - Hop on, and off you go!

A journey can be booked to travel on-demand or up to seven days in advance. Bookings are made and paid for on the TravelEssex app, where you can also track your vehicle in real time before and during the journey.

More information, including maps of the areas served, is available at <https://www.essexhighways.org/digigo>. See also next page.

Easter Services

TRAFFIC NOTICE

EASTER TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS

"CITY SERVICES"

Good Friday	April 11th	} Normal Sunday Service
Easter Sunday	" 13th	
Easter Monday	" 14th	
Saturday	April 12th	- Normal Saturday Service

WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA MOTOR SERVICES LTD., 17/21 LONDON ROAD, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

This issue should be delivered to members over the Easter weekend. Above is a traffic poster from 70 years ago, Easter 1952.

7 March 2022

701/702 Chelmsford City Centre to Sandon P&R / Chelmer Valley P&R (M-S). **Vectare** first day of service, but revision to route and timetable due to Duke Street phase one roadworks. Further route and timetable revisions from 21 March due to phase two of the roadworks. See also 4 April entry below.

19 March

Z2/Z4 Amazon Tilbury to Canning Town / Pitsea (D) **First Essex** contract services for Amazon employees only. These services are arranged by First Travel Solutions, registered by First Essex and currently sub-contracted to **Ensignbus**. However, these arrangements are subject to change after 17 April (updated information to that in EBM 695).

Z1 Amazon Tilbury to Aveley via Lakeside, remains with **Ensignbus**, with four journeys each way, daily.

21 March

Flagfinders timetable and route revisions on closed school contracts HOOLINE 1 and HALCON 2, which both serve Honywood School, Coggeshall

27 March

42B Chelmsford to Braintree & Halstead (Sun) **First Essex** introduction of two / three contract evening journeys on Mon to Sat evenings replacing Go Ahead Hedingham contract service 352. First Essex already operated the Sunday contract.

28 March

Essex County Council commenced operation of **DigiGo** a Daily (0700 - 2200) flexible prebooked service, operating in South Braintree (Central Braintree, Notleys, Rayne and Springwood Industrial Estate) and Central Essex (Felstead, Little Dunmow Barnston, Pleshey, The Easters, The Walthams and Great Leighs. Options are available to travel to Chelmer Valley Park and Ride, Broomfield Hospital, but NOT Central Chelmsford). Operation is with all electric minibuses. See also previous page.

2 April

Ensignbus services 22, 44, 66, 73/A, 77/A & 83 general timetable revisions affecting early morning and late evening journeys.

88 Grays to Stifford Clays (M-S) **Ensignbus** changes to the Mon to Fri service, operating in a one way loop during the am/pm peaks as 88A/88C.

3 April

4A Southend to Shoeburyness (Sun) contract passed from **Arriva Kent Thameside** to **Arrow Taxis**.

4 April

Vectare. Following the early completion of roadworks in Chelmsford City Centre, these services commenced their permanent routes and times: Monday to Saturday, 701 (Sandon P&R - City Centre) every 7/8 minutes peak times and every 15 minutes off peak. 702 (Chelmer Valley P&R – City Centre) every 10 minutes peak and 20 minutes off peak. Further to the 28 February entry in EBM 695, **Arrow Taxis / Essex & Suffolk DRT & First Essex** services also returned to normal line of route early with the re-opening of Tindal Street (the Duke Street closure was still in place on 10 March but had ended by 15th).

23 April

339 Epping Station to Shenfield Station (S, Su) **London Vintage Bus Hire** summer service reintroduced in connection with the Epping to Ongar railway operations and special events.

25 April

Go Ahead Hedingham revised timetable introduced on D1/D2 (Maldon – Southminster/Bradwell)

First Essex Service Revisions 17 April

First Essex are making very extensive service changes from 17 April, the largest single set of changes ever by First Essex and its predecessor Eastern National. These are related to the effects of the pandemic and the ending of Government Covid funding at the start of autumn (see previous page). Information on the changes had not been released by the company in time for us to include before we went to press and so full details will be provided next month. However, we can include the following from the First Essex website:

"These changes are in response to the change in our travel habits; people are travelling less often and have less certainty about how many times a day or week they require travel. These changes are designed to deliver sustainable networks, that are easier to use and continue to provide the ability to travel around the towns and villages across the county on our services. Some buses will run earlier and later in the day, some more often, some less often and there will be new networks in the Basildon, Chelmsford and Colchester areas. Buses that connect the local suburbs to the centre of Basildon, Chelmsford and Colchester will be replaced by locally focussed services with simple, regular timetables, simple, easy to use fares starting at £2.50 for an adult and with new, newer, or fully refurbished vehicles

being introduced over the coming months with a new red based colour scheme. The services that we provide to connect other towns and cities to these locations and each other will also start to see new, newer, or fully refurbished vehicles being introduced and will become Essex Bus services in our new exciting green based colour scheme.

We have already simplified the fares in Chelmsford and Colchester and, from the same date (17 April), we will be bringing the same flexible way to pay for bus travel, by introducing Tap & Cap to Basildon (see page 16).

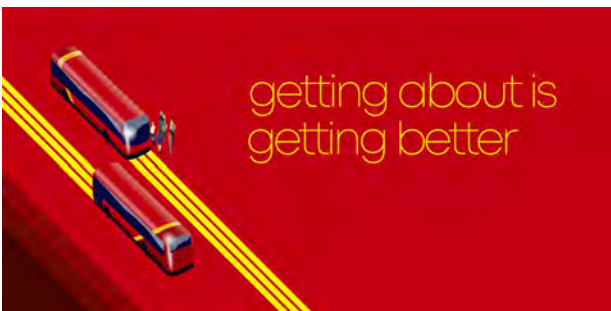
Unfortunately, we are having to increase a small number of ticket prices in South Essex. However, we are not increasing any other fares at this time in recognition of the fact we are all paying more for daily essentials.

Fares increases will be necessary in the future as our costs are also increasing but we will try and keep these increases to a minimum."

In many cases cross-town / city routes are being split into two. Local services are being branded as 'Shuttles' and renumbered with prefixes, B (Basildon), C (Chelmsford) and S (Colchester, S for 'Shuttle'). Many interurban routes are also being renumbered.

With thanks to Paul Harvey, First Essex and Vectare.

Below: Essex has another new stage service operator as Sullivan Buses of South Mimms, Hertfordshire has been awarded TfL cross-border one bus PVR route 549 from Loughton to South Woodford, so involving a lot of dead mileage to take up service. However, Sullivan's are no stranger to Loughton as their buses work on Central Line replacement services. The headway for route 549 has been widened again due to traffic congestion, from 70 to 90 minutes. Enviro 200 MMC AE27 (DB66 SUL) is at Loughton Station in the evening sunshine on 14 March 2022, two days after Sullivan's took over the contract from Stagecoach East London. **Owen Woodliffe**



The blocking off of front seats of Arriva buses (due to the pandemic) has now ceased and all seats are now back in normal use.

Fares

Fares were increased again at Southend and Colchester from 3 April, only six weeks after the last increase (as reported last month) and presumably a reaction to the dramatic increase in fuel prices. At Colchester, singles increased by 10p and returns by 30p, but at Southend the rises are 20p/30p respectively. It is not known if fares at Harlow have been changed, there is nothing on Arriva's website.

Colchester

The final two Darts, 3420/1, were withdrawn on March 4 and 7 respectively. 3421 was removed for scrap on 11 March and 3420 on 14 March.

Then StreetLite 4224 was transferred away to Maidstone (without replacement) on 13 March.

Enviro 200 3989, one of those transferred from Guildford last December, was last used on 23 March and is thought to have been withdrawn.

The new Park & Ride fleet are confirmed as:

4122-5 (SN67 WUL/M/O/P), ADL Enviro 200 MMC B45F, transferred from Gillingham after repaint and fitment of air conditioning.

4123 was used for driver familiarisation from 18 March and entered service briefly on 22 March but then wasn't used again until the 28th; then 4124 entered service on 1 April followed by 4125 on 4th and 4122 on 8th.

They are in Essex CC black P&R livery and are replacing the existing fleet, 4071-5 (SK15 GXR/S/T/U/V), which had been new to Colchester in 2015. 4071 had been transferred away last year and is in service at Gillingham in Arriva blue, and in early April 4072 was taken to Southend ready for transfer to Gillingham. The others were then de-branded and used briefly in Colchester on normal services in plain black. The first was 4073 on the 133 on 29 March, followed by 4075. 4074 remained on P&R and then appeared on the 133 on 5 April. However 4073/5 were then transferred away on 7/8 April and 4074 was expected to follow on the 10th. Their ultimate fate is not yet known.

Southend

Mercedes Sprinter 1014, normally only used for staff shuttles, was exceptionally on service 6 on 4 March.

Versa 4212, transferred here from Guildford last December, has still yet to enter service at Southend.

Destination blind displays have been updated to reflect Southend's city status, e.g., to show "Southend City Travel Ctr" as a destination and "Southend City Centre" as a passing point.

Service changes saw the Sunday ECC supported 4A (Southend to Woking & Shoebury) pass to Arrow Taxis after 27 March. More substantial changes are due to be implemented in June, we will give further details in due course, but in summary, service 1 will be split, running as 1 Southend to Rayleigh and 2 Southend to Shoebury. There will be frequency reductions on 6, 7, 8 & 29.

Right: Mercedes-Benz Sprinter AY67 PXN, on 3 April 2022, the first day of Arrow Taxis working the Sunday 4A, at North Shoebury Corner on the first journey towards Woking and Shoebury. Displaying a 'lazy' blind of "Shoeburyness Southend", but these blinds are notoriously difficult to capture on camera. **Richard Delahoy**



Harlow

Optare Versa 4183 has gained a super rear advert promoting HM Government investment in Harlow homes and businesses.

For the first time this winter, in the last month there have been noticeable cuts, particularly in the morning peak but sometimes all day. These appear to be a mixture of staff and vehicle problems.

With thanks to John Card, Matthew Evans, Adam Kelleher, John Lidstone, Justin Marquis, James Sadd, Keith Sadler, Tim Webb and the M&D & East Kent Bus Club.

Firstly my apologies for a couple of errors on page 22 of EBM 695, due to misleading press reports and information only received just before EBM went to press with no time to verify it. (Editor's note: I take responsibility for this, I wanted the news to be included in EBM 695, especially as there was a five week gap until this issue, but looking back I should have held back until it had been checked.)

It was recently acquired Scania OmniCity YN56 FAF, which has been allocated fleet number 972, that went to Eastern Europe to act as a mobile blood bank for casualties of the war in Ukraine, not similar YN56 NVC (now allocated fleet number 971) which continues its work as an NHS mobile vaccination centre, and was seen in Colchester on 9 March. 972 left Harwich International Port on the Stena Line ferry to the Hook of Holland, then was driven across the Netherlands, Germany, and Poland. It had reached Lviv in Ukraine on 21 March. This was achieved through the NHS, the charity Emergency First, and Ipswich Buses working together.

As reported in EBM 695, 83 (KX58 GUW), the first NHS mobile vaccination bus, has now been repainted into fleet livery, refurbished, and re-seated by Hants & Dorset Trim. It now has 37 seats. It reached Essex on Saturdays 26 March and 2 April when it worked the all-day duty on Ipswich - Manningtree 92.

EBM 690 page 18 reported the acquisition of 64 (OU54 PGZ), a Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekka, from Vision Travel of Blackrod. 64 is fitted with high backed semi-coach seats, so it has been repainted into Ipswich Coachlines livery. It has also been re-registered, to SGZ 6664. It is to be fitted with seat belts for use on private hires and school contracts. 64 worked into Essex on Sunday 6 March on Ipswich - Colchester planned rail replacement journeys for Greater Anglia. Also used on this rail replacement service were Scania OmniDekkas 60/1/2 (PJ54 YZT/U/V), plus Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse 160 (SN57 DDF).

Last December, 55 (PN52 XB0), a DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlander, was repainted into the current green & purple livery. This had been the last bus in the old white & green livery. 55 used to be regularly allocated to Langham - East Bergholt High School route 694. On 8 and 10 March, 55 returned to Essex when it worked both journeys on 694, at 0821 ex Langham, and 1545 ex East Bergholt High School.

Ipswich Buses have 13 Optare Tempo SR which were new to TrentBarton in 2012, and obtained by Ipswich Buses in 2019. They are all route branded, for Ipswich town services 9, 10, 12, 13. However on 7 March, 97 (YJ12 GWO), with pink Chantry Connexions branding for service 13, was very unusual on 1645 Ipswich - Colchester 93, and 1810 Colchester - Ipswich 93.

On 14 March, Mercedes Citaro 154 (BF65 HVU) worked 0720 Thorrington Crossroads - Suffolk Rural College Otley RC1. Later the same day 154 returned to Essex to work on Clacton - Mistley 2/A. Very unusual to see a 12m long Citaro on this service which is normally worked by an 8.9m long ADL Enviro 200s. Right: 154 on 1615 Mistley - Clacton 2 turning from Long Road into Colchester Road, Lawford. **Robert Appleton**



Colchester routes 4 & 11 also saw long single-deckers instead of the usual 8.9m long Enviro 200s in the form of the ex-Lothian Buses Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse: 160 (SN57 DDF) on 15 & 28 March, 161 (SN57 DCX) on 22 March & 4 April, and 162 (SK07 CGO) on 29 March.

On Saturdays, services 92 Ipswich - Manningtree and 93 Ipswich - Colchester can be worked by single-deckers instead of double-deckers. On 19 March there was a good variety. Enviro 200 74 (DU60 LOJ) was on 92. Service 93 had Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse 162 and Mercedes Citaro 154.

With thanks to Stephen Barham, Wayne Bell, Adam Kelleher, Coach & Bus Week, Ipswich Buses website, Ipswich Buses Enthusiast Facebook Group and the Ipswich Transport Society Journal.

Acquired Vehicles

33983	SN65 OFY	SFDB32BR2FGX18544	F415/8	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No.1)
33984	SN65 OFZ	SFDB32BR2FGX18545	F415/9	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No.1)
33985	SN65 OGA	SFDB32BR2FGX18551	F415/10	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No.1)
33986	SN65 OGB	SFDB32BR2FGX18587	F415/11	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No.1)
33987	SN65 OGC	SFDB32BR2FGX18588	F415/12	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No.1)
33988	SN65 OGD	SFDB32BR2FGX18590	F415/13	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No.1)
33989	SN65 OGE	SFDB32BR2FGX18591	F415/14	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No.1)

Alexander Dennis E40D / Enviro 400 MMC. These are the first ADL E40Ds in the fleet, although the Enviro 400 MMC bodywork is on Scania 36837-43 (Essex Airlink vehicles). They were driven down from Glasgow on Saturday 26 March 2022 by engineering staff from Essex. Two went to Basildon and five to Chelmsford for preparation for service.

33983/5-7/9 arrived in Urban livery but with gold branding for 'X' routes, consisting of a 'wedge' at the top front and a super rear advert. They also have a gold thin line at skirt level in place of the normal magenta, and 'First Xpress' main fleet names (see photos). 33983 was branded for route X3, 33985/6/7/9 for routes X85 & X87. 33984 and 33988 had also been in this livery but they were repainted to Urban 2 in summer 2019 (the former) and winter 2021-22 (the latter). 33984 also has gold branding for route X3, a thin gold line at skirt level and 'First Xpress' main fleet names. 33988 has none of these, it arrived with 'Glasgow' fleet names. By 8 April, these had been replaced by 'Essex' ones. 33984 & 33988 have white fronts, so are in the same livery (excluding the gold on 33984) as First Essex 69429/32/4, they are the first FE double-deckers in this version of Urban 2.

Below: 33986, 33984 and 33988 at Southwaite Services on the way back from Glasgow on 26 March. Note the former is in Urban livery and the other two in Urban 2. The 'HB' by the fleet number on the side of 33986 is for 'Highbridge'. **Jack Benese**

Opposite bottom: 33983, 33985 and one other at Westway on 28 March. In Urban livery with 'X' routes gold branding, plus the thin line at skirt level in gold rather than magenta. **David Edwards**



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 11 2021/22 (23 January - 19 February)

Additional to EBM 695

67194 BN-CF

Period 12 2021/22 (20 February - 26 March)

32068 CR (oos)-CR, 32526 BN-CR, 32540 BN-CR, 33376 HH (oos)-Disposal, 33416 BN (oos)-BN, 33419 BN (oos)-BN, 33553 BN-BN (oos), 33561 BN (oos)-BN, 33983 FG-(oos), 33984 FG-(oos), 33985 FG-(oos), 33986 FG-(oos), 33987 FG-(oos), 33988 FG-(oos), 33989 FG-(oos), 37133 CR (oos)-CF (oos), 37135 CR (oos)-CR, 37136 CR-CR (oos), 42487 HH-CF, 42895 HH-CF, 42934 CF (oos)-CF, 63061 CF (oos)-CR, 63064 CF (oos)-CR, 63065 CF (oos)-CR, 66798 CR-CR (oos), 66803 CR-CR (oos), 66808 CF-CF (oos), 66815 CF-CR, 66823 CF-CR, 66828 CR-CR (oos), 66872 CF-CR, 67166 BN-BN (oos), 67192 CF-HH, 67194 CF-HH

After over a month out of use after its MOT expired, 32068 returned to service on 4 March.

The transfer of 32526 and 32540 means that of the batch 32526/30-2/9-40 that were originally allocated to Basildon, all except 32539 have now moved to Colchester (see photos on page 18).

Acquired 33416 and 33419 have entered service after repaint (see below), the former on 25 March and the latter on 16th. They have been used on various routes from BN.

37133 arrived at Westway from Quayside on suspended tow on 1 March. It was parked in the usual spot for withdrawn vehicles, just inside the front gate to the left of (from the road) the driver training vehicles. It has numerous engine defects listed and some parts removed, including its Ticketer (although the base plate remains). However, by 24th it was inside the workshops undergoing repair.

At Colchester, 66798, 66803 and 66828 are all out of service for disposal, Ticketers and various other bits have been removed.

At Chelmsford, 66808 was taken out of service after 18 February with an engine fault, not to be repaired.

On 7 March, 42487 and 42895 were both in use at Hadleigh during the morning, then both transferred to CF in exchange for 67192 and 67194 which were used at HH from mid-afternoon.

Converted Vehicle

Further to last month, Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse 66825 is being used as a driver trainer, but it is not clear whether this is a full conversion.



Repaints

33416, 33418 & 33419 repainted from First West of England orange 'Excel' livery to green Essex Bus livery at Mardens. Unlike 33412 & 33413 (see EBM 694) these do not have route 100 branding. Like 33413 these have the 'mid-shade' green wedge at the front upper deck. 33412, the first to be repainted, and the only one to have this wedge in the darker shade, was amended sometime between 27 March and 6 April to match the rest.

Tap & Cap Basildon

Following the launch of 'tap&cap' in Chelmsford and Colchester as reported in the last two EBMs, it was due to be introduced in Basildon from 17 April, to tie in with the service revisions from that date (see above). It will be available within the Basildon shuttles zone, covering the area between Pitsea and Laindon, the A127 (including Noak Bridge and Steeple View) and the A13. Single fares will be reduced to £2.50; returns will no longer be available. Details of adult fares (similar arrangements for child fares):

Tap each time you get on the bus...	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
	...you'll never pay more than £6	...you'll never pay more than £5 a day			...you'll never pay more than £1 a day		
1 st tap	£2.50	£2.50	£2.50	£2.50	£1	£1	£1
2 nd tap	£1.50	£1.50	£1.50	£1.50	FREE		
3 rd tap	£1	£1	£1	£1			
4 th tap	£1	FREE					
any further taps that day	FREE						
...you'll never pay more than £24 a week							

Area News & Workings

Colchester

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

37062 has received a green based super rear advert for 'Supporting Residents and Businesses of Tendring'. This replaces the one for 'First and Unite the Union'.

66760 was on loan from Chelmsford to Colchester from 23 February to 19 March.

News of the Harwich routes (1 March - 4 April 2022). Fourteen Volvo B7TLs and three Volvo B9TLs worked on 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103, the only single-decker spotted on this journey was 66971 on 17th. Only two Volvo B7TLs worked through to Harwich on service 104, these were 32532 (Gemini) on 8th and 32068 (ALX 400) on 23rd. The other Volvo B7TL / Transbus ALX400, 32087, worked 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103 on 8th. Thus services to & from Harwich were nearly all single-deckers. These were all of the ten Volvo B7RLEs still on the CR allocation, plus 66815 from CF on 22nd, and all twelve of the Enviro 300s allocated to CR. Plus just four StreetLites recorded, 63333 on 14th, 63341 on 30th, and two of the StreetLites in Southampton City Red livery, 63063 on 16th, and 63065 on 4th, 7th, 25th & 28th.

Clacton routes. 74B: 37010 (30th), 37016 (9th), 37035 (29th), 37036 (9 April), 37042 (17th), 63338 (2 April part), 63333 (24th), 66760 from CF (5 & 7 April), 66801 (1 April), 66804 (11th), 66810 (7th, 23rd, 25th part, 26th), 66816 (12th), 66970 (10th, 21st), 67735 (28th, 31st), 67736 (8th), 67737 (18th, 8 April), 67750 (15th, 19th, 25th part, 4 April), 67755 (14th), 67779 (22nd, 2 April part), 67805 (16th).

76 (in date order): 37035 (13th), 67755 (20th), 37053, 66810, 67736 (all 27th), 37054 (3 April), 67739 (10 April).

37015 was an unusual double-decker on route 64 on 7 April.

Chelmsford

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

After the end of the Chelmsford Park & Ride contract after service on Saturday 5 March, from Monday 7th the P&R vehicles were used on normal routes (up to three, or occasionally four, a day had been prior to this due to the P&R service reductions caused by Covid). One a day continues to be used on school route S33 and Tuesdays only 35. As recorded above, two, 69172 & 67194, moved to Hadleigh, with Darts 42487 & 42895 being received by Chelmsford in exchange. All P&R branding has been removed, although they currently retain their 'Kendrick's Kingdom' super rear and side adverts (but note next paragraph).



Above: Further to the notes and map re the diversions in Chelmsford City Centre in last month's issue, 67197 is seen on 15 March 2022 serving the temporary stops in Market Road, stripped of its Park & Ride branding. By that date the section of Duke Street closed for road works had reopened but Tindal Street was still closed. To contradict the previous paragraph, this bus has actually lost its 'Kendrick's Kingdom' offside advert but retains its super rear one. **Robert Appleton**

Unusual / Interesting workings.

X10: 44080 (11th), 44545 (10 April), 66823 (16th), 69024 (30th). X30: Blue 67161 (30th).

32672 on school route S33 on 9th, instead of normal ex-P&R black Enviro 200 MMC.

On Tuesdays-only 35 (and thus also on S33 those days) have been: 67191 (8th, 29th), 67195 (15th, 22nd). No service 5 April due to Easter school holidays.

DS66860 on driver training in Broomfield Road (9th). 44900 on 57 (6 April).

Basildon & Hadleigh

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

Route 9 continues to be mainly Enviro 400 and StreetLite operated, but with most days more of the former than the latter. Orange Enviro 400s on the route: 33414 (15th, 29th) & 33415 (9th, 15th, 4 April). Green Enviro 400 33413 (7 April, its first day in service, see photo on page 32). Non-Enviro 400 double deckers reported have been 32249 (11th), 32260 (10th, 19th, 21st, 26th), 32539 (11th, 5 April), 32540 (7th, 9th), 33186 (12th, 16th, 24th). Mini Enviro 200 44910 on 1 April and Enviro 350H 67901 on 9 April.

Routes 94/A continued to be mainly operated by either two StreetLites or one plus a mini-Enviro 200, although fewer appearances of the latter in the past month. Only two double-deckers seen, 33544 on 17th and 33425 which took over from 44909 on the 1300 from Basildon for the remainder of the duty on 21st.

Double-deckers on route 100 (Basildon to Lakeside): Green / branded 33412 has been a regular, also no reports of this bus on any other routes except for on 5 on 9 April, 32260 (23rd), orange 33415 (19th), 33424 (12th, 18th, 19th), 33425 (18th, 24th), 33545 (12th), 33548 (29th, 5 April), 33551 (31st), 33555 (9th, 7 April), 33557 (8 April), 33567 (30th, 31st), 33568 (7 April), 33570 (9 April). Mini-Enviro 44909 on 29th.

Double-deckers on route 16: Green 33416 (6 April), 33425 (19th), 33544 (2 April). Plus Hybrid Volvo 69906 on 23rd.

Below: as mentioned under 'Allocation Changes' above, 32539 is now the only Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini allocated to Basildon.

It is seen on route 9, top, at Green's Farm Road, Billericay on 28 January 2022 **Chris Stewart**, and bottom, on 5 April in King's Road, Brentwood, just up from the Railway Station. This is the same location as Alan Moore's rear shot of RT3520 on route 339 on page 26 of EBM 694 which was taken almost 48 years ago. **Adam Kelleher**



Other Unusual / Interesting workings.

33563 an unusual double-decker on 251 (20th). Mini-Enviro 200s 44909 (20th) and 44910 (3 April) also on 251.

47521 (11th), 47524 (14th), 47527 (18th), 47649 (9th), 47650 (17th) on school route 822.

HH63328 on 26 all-day on 4 April, long-wheelbase single-deckers are not usually allocated to this route.

HH69515 on 27 (8 April).

47651 (16th), 47656 (21st), 67168 (15th), 67902 (8th), 69907 (10th), 69917 (11th) on school route 625.

HH63164 (7th), HH63331 (21st) on school route 822. HH63165 (14th), HH63331 (25th) on school route 827.

69915 on school route 561 (8th).

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Dale Bell, Stephen Barham, Jack Bennee, Nigel Clark, Jon Collins, Richard Delahoy, David Edwards, John Lidstone, Gareth Norris, John Podgorski, John Salmon, Derek Stebbing, Chris Stewart, Andrew Toms, First Essex, Bustimes, Bus Lists on the Web, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

Below: EBM 695 included a photo of 42940 on route 45 on diversion in Victoria Road taken by David Moth on 2 March 2022. There is an interesting follow up to that. Later the same afternoon, 42940 failed at the Heath Drive terminus of the 45. A mechanic brought mini-Enviro 200 44915 to replace it in service and a second attended in engineering van SN17 NXZ. However, they were unable to get it going and left it there; presumably it was towed away. It returned to service on 22 March. Both **Andrew Toms**



A Remarkable Survivor

The recently published EBM Extra 1 featured an article 'First Essex Scotland Connections'. There are now further connections with the acquisition of the seven Enviro 400 MMCs from Glasgow, as reported and illustrated on pages 14 & 15. And here is another one.

Right: When Group member **Jack Benee** went to Glasgow to collect one of the Enviro 400 MMCs on 26 March he took this photo of Optare Solo 53102 (E002 FLB), which had been new to Essex Buses as 502 in red livery for TfL route 193. It was one of 37 E002 reg Solos purchased by Essex Buses and is the only one still owned by First Bus. Many of its sisters have been scrapped in the last few years, the last to be sold by Essex went in June 2018.

First Glasgow also operate 53209 (CN07 KZM) which was owned by First Essex between August 2017 and August 2018.

Below: The same bus 15 years ago, on route 193 on 22 February 2007 at the then recently opened Queen's Hospital, Romford. By then, the bus and route had transferred to First Capital. **Adam Kelleher**



STEPHENSONS **NiBS**buses by Richard Delahoy

Last month we reported the acquisition of three Scania N230UD / Scania, H41/22D from RATP (new to London Sovereign). In fact, a total of 22 such buses are being acquired, comprising:

YT09 ZCA, ZCE, ZCF, ZCI, YT59 RYA, RYF, RYK, RYM, SFQ, SFY, SFZ, SGV, SHJ, SFF, DXY, DYY, FYO, FYP, FZA, FZG, PBF, PCF (originally SP 56-8/60, 76, 80/4/5, 90/4/5/8, 102/4/5/8-10/9/25/6/32, latterly numbered in the SP40xxx series).

We will provide further details of the fate of these buses, some of which will go on fleet after single door conversion, in due course.

Stephensons received an Ensignbus StreetDeck, 180 (LX71 AOP), on loan at Rochford from 8 March to 18 March 2022; it was used as a demonstrator. The photo below, taken by **Matthew Evans**, shows it in the Rochford depot yard on 13 March.



Former New Horizon Volvo SFZ 525, originally LF52 TGO and nominally numbered 708, was sold in March to A1 Coaches, Skelmersdale.

Also ex New Horizon but not used by Stephensons, Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus HF54 HGY has been sold to Regional Transport, Shrewsbury.

The small outstation at Great Bromley (at the old Talisman Coachlines depot) was closed after operations on 26 March and the allocation of four buses for Tending area services has moved to the former New Horizon yard at Frating, joining the school bus operations from there.

In Southend, new route 24A, Southend Travel Centre to Newington Avenue, via Woodgrange Drive, every 30 minutes, is being introduced from 18 April, replacing the Southchurch section of First Essex route 26 which is being withdrawn. The existing 24 (via North Avenue) will be reduced to every 30 minutes but with the new 24A will offer a combined 15-minute headway for Newington Avenue.

Right: Optare Solo 322 (EU07 FVM) was displayed at the Southend Bus Rally on 3 June 2007 when new, this poster explained its purchase. Sadly, this bus has now met an unfortunate end, details on the next page. **Richard Delahoy**

With thanks to the companies, Terry Torch, Terry Smith, Matt Crooke and LOTS.



EU07 FVM

Optare Solo, B24F

One of 4 Optare Solos acquired in March 2007 for the newly won, Essex County Council supported network of routes in the Dengie Peninsular, connecting Maldon, Purleigh, Latchingdon, Maylandsea, Bradwell, Burnham on Crouch, Althorne and South Woodham Ferrers - take a look at the route map on the back of the bus!

The Dengie Connections livery was designed by Best Impressions and the buses were supplied by Mistral.

Entered by Richard Delahoy for Stephensons of Essex

Below: Solo 322 suffered a turbocharger failure and was burnt out whilst operating service 313A on 7 March 2022; there were no injuries to staff or passengers. This photo shows it two months earlier in Great Dunmow High Street on 5 January on the 313 with a commendably clear destination display. **Richard Delahoy**

Bottom: Further to EBM 694, the conversion of Solo 330 (MX59 AWF) to a second mobile vaccination bus is now complete and it entered service in mid-March, as seen in **Matt Crooke's** photo at Boreham depot on 16 March 2022.





Above: NIBS 635 (YN55 NHF) exiting Middleton Hall Road, Brentwood back on to Shenfield Road, on a diverted route 81 to Hutton, due to emergency road works on 3 March 2022, with Group member Chris Hatley driving. **Chris Stewart**

hedingham chambers

by Mark Lloyd

Significant Allocations

283	HD - KN	by 9 March 2022
292	HD - CN	by 21 March - for repaint to new livery by others
294	KN - CN	by 4 March
500	KNu - HDu	preparation for use
514	KN - HD	by 24 March
521	CN - KN	by 24 March

WVL325 (LX59 DCU) arrived at Kelvedon by 2 March. This is in addition to those already reported at Clacton earlier this year.

Fleet News

510 (LB02 YWX) had returned to use from KN by the end of the month. 910 (SF04 SKD) was still not operational. Enviro 400s 640/3 had not been seen in service and 851 (AO57 EZL) was long term off road as well. 284 (OU57 FGX) still remained in the corner of the engineering yard late into March. To support the fleet maintenance a rolling road has been installed at HD.

Service News

ECC supported evening route 352 ceased after 25 March replaced by First Essex. It has been renumbered 42B to match their existing ECC Sunday service. From Monday 28 March, route 88 1008 ex Halstead and 1104 ex Colchester have been reinstated, along with Saturday am journeys on service 89. Also, service 89 has had small changes to early and late running times. There were also small changes to Clacton services 97/98/98A and 99 during the evenings.

With thanks to John Podgorski and the Hedingham website.



Dealer Stock Movements March 2022

Vehicles In

From **Arriva London**: Enviro 400s LJ59 LZD-H/K-O/LYT-W/LYK/O/P/S/LXP-T

From **Brighton & Hove**: Scania YR58 RUJ

From **First Essex**: Trident LK53 EYV. This was fleet number 33376 and was reported as a disposal by First Essex in EBM 695.

From **Go Ahead London**: Enviro 400s LX56 ETZ, LX58 CWW, Volvo B5LHs LX61 GXE/F, Enviro 200 LX09 AYK

From **Go Ahead North East**: Scania NK56 KHH/J/L/W/Z/KKF/H/L/KJZ/GJO

From **Plymouth Citybus**: Volvo B7TLs LX54 GZD-F

From **Stagecoach Highlands**: Volvo B7Rs SP07 FCY, SV08 DHO, Volvo B12B SV09 EGY

Vehicles Out

Ambassador Travel, Great Yarmouth: Volvo B7RLEs GN07 AVK/M

Avondale, Glasgow: Dart DG52 TYP

Candy Coaches, Slough: Scania YR58 RUJ

Coastal Liner, Wolverhampton: Scania BYZ 2386

Cotswold Green, Gloucester: Solos NK54 DFC/DEU

Decker Bus, Southampton: Volvo B7TLs WU02 KVF, LT52 WWP

Faresaver, Chippenham: Volvo B9TLs LK59 CWY/CWR

First South West: Volvo B9TLs LK59 CXF/N/FCO (converted to part open top)

First Scotland East: Enviro 400s LJ09 CBF/CCE/CAX (converted to part open top)

Galleon Travel, Stansted: Dart BA52 GHA - see page 28.

Gardbus, Eastleigh: Solo GP02 DPV

Hardwicks, Barnsley: Scania YN05 HCO

Herbert's Coaches, Sheffield, Beds: Volvo B9TLs SN09 CVF/K

Heyfordian, Bicester, Oxfordshire: Scania JFZ 7006

HGV Training, NW5: Enviro 200 LX09 AYF

Imperial Coaches, Slough: Volvo B9TLs SN09 CUH/V/W/Y

Mike Lawrenson, Preston: Enviro 200 AJ58 PZM

South East Coachworks, Faversham: Enviro 200 GN08 CHH

To Shelton Motors for scrap

DAF SB120 NK04 FPA, Dart SN03 LDU, Volvo B7TL LK54 GZD, Volvo B5LH LX61 GXF, Enviro 400 LX58 CWW, Trident LK53 EYV

Ensignbus Fleet

As illustrated on the front and rear covers, Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 130 (LX15 GPY) has been repainted in a special gold and white livery to celebrate Ensignbus's 50th Anniversary.

The 2022 Southend open-top season on route 68 started on 2 April, the first day of the Easter school holidays. Enviro 500 368 (68 EB) was in use on the first day, although 370 had worked the morning trip from Lakeside and was parked at the pier during the day.

With thanks to Ross Newman and Richard Delahoy

Opposite page top: Ensignbus have been providing and staffing six buses for schools work on behalf of Stagecoach South East since last September. The buses are garaged at the Stagecoach depots at Ashford (two) and Herne Bay (four) and during the day are parked at Tenterden and Canterbury respectively. Ensignbus drivers run to and from Purfleet in crew vehicles each day. In this photo by **Roger French** (<https://busandtrainuser.com/>) red 136 (BJ11 DVV), a Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 heads up three blue ones parked at the Canterbury New Dover Road Park & Ride site between trips on 2 March 2022. The vehicles are swapped over for maintenance periodically. Thanks also to the M&D & EK Bus Club for info.

Opposite page bottom: Wrightbus StreetDeck 168 (LX71 AOB) in Usk Road, Aveley on 28 March 2022. **Keith Shayshutt**



Further to EBM 695, the Dawson Rentals Enviro 200 MMCs for Chelmsford Park & Ride are numbered 902-909, YX21 RYP and YX22 OGJ/K/L/M/N/O/P.

903 was in use as the accessible shuttle from Shenfield Station to the temporary bus station in Hunter Avenue during rail replacement on 12 March (see below and opposite page), a duty which had been (and was subsequently) fulfilled by a Sprinter.

Spare vehicles have been used on other services - for example, on 26 March, 902 was on 22 and 903 on 31, while on 1 April 903 was on 19. In contrast, fleet liveried 305 was on Sandon Park & Ride on 8 April.

With thanks to Dale Bell and John Card.

Right: 906 (YX22 OGM) at the Sandon Park & Ride terminus on 7 March 2022, the first day of Vectare operation of the Chelmsford Park & Ride services.

Jaiden Buck-Auld



Below: Close-up of the vinyls on the sides of these on-loan vehicles, 903 (YX22 OGJ) at Shenfield Station on 12 March.

Chris Stewart



Right: Front view of 903 (YX22 OGI) in use as the accessible shuttle from Shenfield Station to the temporary bus station in Hunter Avenue during rail replacement on 12 March 2022. **Chris Stewart**



Below: When Vectare reorganise the 13 group of services from 19 April, use of the S13 route number is to be discontinued. 305 (YX69 NWB) displays this number as it departs from St John's Church in Epping having served the school of the same name on the morning journey to St Margaret's Hospital on 15 March 2022. **Owen Woodliffe**. As noted above, this bus was unusual on Park & Ride on 8 April.

This bus was also illustrated in EBM 694 on the normal 13. Last month it was noted that that photo was taken at Anwell Court, Waltham Abbey. Allan White has written in with a minor correction plus kindly provided some additional information: "The location is actually Amwell Court not Anwell Court. I don't know this location but it caught my eye due to my long term interest in the New River which starts at Amwell Springs in Ware and then passes through the village of Amwell End quite near to where I live. It also gives its name to the nearby Amwell Roundabout on the A414 but I'm not sure what the connection is with Waltham Abbey which is quite a few miles away."



Acquired Vehicles

BA52 GHA, Transbus Mini Pointer Dart, B28F, new to GHA Coaches 11/02

From Ensignbus, previously with GHA Coaches, although it did spend some time with Pilkington Bus and gained the registration R15 PLK. After re-joining GHA it regained its original registration number.

Further to last month, of the acquired vehicles listed in EBM's 693 & 694, Solo KX57 KGF was reported in service on route 14 on 29 March, but there has been no sign of Enviro 200s LX07 BYA and SN57 DWZ.

Withdrawn Vehicles

Solos RGZ 7805 (ex WX05 RRY), last reported in service in July 2021, and RRZ 5654 (ex SF05 HXE), last reported in service in August 2021, have been taken out of service to use for spare parts and have not been allocated new fleet numbers (see below). Neither has Solo RGZ 7808 (ex YJ05 XOR) which was reported as withdrawn from service in EBM 689 following accident damage.

Disposals

Solos CE52 UWR (reported out of use in EBM 694) and FY52 RZC (reported out of use in EBM 691) went to Shelton Motors for scrap in December 2021.

Route Workings

Only five double-deckers continue in use on the 420/A, YP59 OEO/R/S/T/U. This means the regular use of single deck vehicles on Ongar / North Weald routes from Harlow, and it is not unknown for people to be left behind in Epping in the afternoon peak. YP59 OES was unusual on route 410 on Saturday 19 March.

Fleet Numbering

The fleet has been numbered, using four digit numbers, 1xxx for single-deckers and 2xxx for double-deckers, with the second digit allocated according to type. Very reminiscent of Eastern National in August 1964! Details in the table on the opposite page. However, as at the end of March, no vehicles had been seen carrying fleet numbers. The two vehicles for the East End Gangster Tour, Trident X336 NNO and Scania OmniCity YN56 FBX are not included in the numbering.

With thanks to John Card, Paul Harvey, Owen Woodliffe and LOTS. Apologies to John Card for omitting his name from last month's credits.



Opposite bottom: Central Connect use their Optare MetroDecker CT21 GAL (ex Y121 FDD) from Loughton to St Edmund's College, Colliers End, some six miles north of Ware, on their route 19. Looking smart in the early morning sunshine at The Crown stop in High Road, Loughton, it awaits to depart at 0726 for its 45 minute journey on 15 March 2022. It has now been numbered 2101. **Owen Woodliffe**

Type	Fleet Number	Registration Number	Notes
Optare Solo	1001	SGZ 2221	M850 Slimline
	1002	SGZ 2223	M850 Slimline
	1003	RGZ 7806	M880
	1004	RGZ 7809	M920
	1005	RGZ 7807	M880
	1006	SGZ 2218	M950 Slimline
	1007	SGZ 2219	M920
	1008	MV07 DWM	M850 Slimline
	1009	KX57 KGA	M880
	1010	KX57 KGF	M880
	1011	KX57 KFZ	M880
	1012	KX58 AYF	M950
	1013	YJ09 MHO	M880
Scania CN230UB / Scania	1089	SGZ 1089	Numbered to match registration
Mercedes-Benz Sprinter	1101	CC04 GAL	
Wrightbus StreetLite	1201	CC10 BUS	
	1202	CC11 BUS	
Transbus Dart / Pointer	1301	KP02 PVO	Driver Trainer
ADL Dart / East Lancs Esteem	1302	P056 JFE	
ADL Enviro 200	1401	LX07 BYA	
	1402	LX07 BXV	
	1403	SN57 DWV	
	1404	SN57 DWZ	
	1405	LJ57 USU	
	1406	LJ58 AVE	
	1407	CC55 BUS	
	1408	CC54 BUS	
Optare Tempo X1200	1501	YJ11 EHH	
	1502	YJ11 EHO	
	1503	YJ11 EHS	
	1504	YJ11 EHW	
	1505	YJ11 EHG	
ADL Enviro 200 MMC	1601	CC21 GAL	
	1602	CE21 GAL	
	1603	CC71 GAL	
	1604	CE71 GAL	
Scania N230UD / OmniCity	2001	YP59 OEX	
	2002	YP59 OEM	
	2003	YP59 OER	
	2004	YP59 OES	
	2005	YP59 OEV	
	2006	YP59 OEU	
	2007	YP59 OEN	
	2008	YP59 OEO	
	2009	YP59 OET	
	2010	YP59 OEW	
MetroDecker M1114	2101	CT21 GAL	
	2102	CT71 GAL	Not yet delivered, may be re-registered

Further to EBM 689, acquired Enviro 200 KX11 EEH has been converted to single door and repainted into fleet livery. It entered service without vinyls but has now received these.

Enviro 200 AB09 PAN (ex LJ09 KPU) has had seat belts fitted and been painted white ready for sale.

With thanks to Adam Barham

Below: Former Arriva London Enviro 200 VB09 PAN (ex LJ09 KRD) on Manningtree Station Approach under stormy skies on 29 January 2022 operating Colchester - Harwich rail replacement service for Greater Anglia. **Robert Appleton**



Other Operators

by Roger A Smith

Barker, Roydon

The following vehicles are reported as recent arrivals here:

WX05 NFY, an Ayats CH59/16FT, ex AH Coaches, Yaxley, Cambridgeshire

YN07 EAP, an Irisbus 395E.9.27, with Beulas C35FT body, ex Alderton, Portishead, Somerset

OU09 FNE, a Van Hool CH63/24FT, ex Speldhurst, Blunham, Bedfordshire

CN61 FAM, another Van Hool, this time a CH63/24DT, ex Procter, Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire.

New Horizon Travel, Frating

Further to EBM 693, New Horizon Travel have now surrendered their operator's licence with effect from 3 April 2022, having ceased coaching operations last year and then selling their school bus business to Stephensons from 1 January 2022. The owners are retiring.

New Southend Pier Train

Further to EBM 695, the first of the new battery powered trains for Southend Pier finally entered service on Tuesday 5 April, without formal ceremony or prior announcement, over six months after it had been delivered.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy and the PSV Circle.

696 for EBM 696

Two coaches this month.

Right: Biss Bros of Bishop's Stortford **696** BTV at Seaway Coach Park, Southend-on-Sea on 5 June 1988. A 1986 Bova Futura C49Ft. **Robert Downton**



Below: Eastern National 1128 (**B696** WAR), a Leyland Tiger TRC/TL11/3RH with Plaxton Paramount 3500 (high floor) C51F body, new in January 1985, originally in Highwayman coach livery. At Chelmsford bus station on 15 April 1995 with two of the three D-reg Leyland Olympian commuter coaches, 4510-4512, behind. All three are in Eastern National Badgerline style bus livery, this livery did not have a dual-purpose or coach variation. At the time, this route 193 was a Chelmsford - London commuter express service. **Robert Appleton**



Rear Cover

Top: Arriva Southend Pride liveried 6509 on 5 April 2022 on Marine Parade in Leigh showing the very clear new 'diversion' display, which alternates with the usual destination, number and passing points. Being driven by Group member Matthew Evans.

Bottom: Rear view of Ensignbus 130 in Golden Jubilee livery, taken three days before the front cover photo, the weather was not as good and the photographer got soaked! Mardens, 30 March 2022.

Both **John G Lidstone**

First Essex Additional Photos

Below: First Essex 33413 was illustrated at Mardens in EBM 694 having been repainted into Essex Bus livery, in a photo by John G Lidstone taken on 28 January 2022, the day it returned to Basildon depot. However, it was not until 7 April that it finally entered service, on route 9, as seen at Brentwood Station. John's photo showed the route branding for service 100 on the between decks panels, this photo illustrates the perils of placing them in that position. **Adam Kelleher**

Bottom: 42934 on route 54 on 14 March 2022 at the stop outside Tesco on Springfield Road, the day it returned to service after being out of use since 8 February. Note the 'Tap & Cap' advert on the side. **Andrew Toms**



Farewell to Southend's trams

by Richard Delahoy

Eighty years ago this month witnessed the final stage of the run down and closure of Southend's trams, when on 8 April 1942 the Chairman of the Transport Committee, Cllr. Selby, drove the ceremonial last car from the Civic House "Porters" to the depot off London Road, bringing the curtain down on almost 41 years of operation.

The low-key affair occurred in the depths of World War 2 and was only attended by a few well-wishers, although, somewhat amazingly given the wartime restrictions, two months earlier the LRTL (Light Railway Transport League) had organised a farewell tour which was attended by enthusiasts from as far away as Birmingham and Cornwall.

The Southend tramway had opened in July 1901, the system running from the High Street, just north of the railway bridge, up to Victoria Circus where lines then radiated out to Leigh, Prittlewell, Southchurch and the Beach (terminating at the Kursaal). Later extensions then took the lines eastwards along the seafront to Thorpe Bay and inland via the Boulevards back to Southchurch (all opened by 1914) and then in 1921 a loop line round Warrior Square in the town centre supplemented the High Street terminus.

But as early as 1912 part of the Prittlewell circular route was abandoned, with a further cut back in 1921, truncating that section to just a short line northwards up Victoria Avenue to the Blue Boar. That route was then supplemented by experimental trolleybuses from 1925 and these electrically powered but more flexible vehicles replaced the Prittlewell service completely in 1928 and were then used to open up new routes to serve the rapidly expanding town.

Modernisation was slow coming to the system and over time the tramway became less relevant to the town's needs as motor buses - most privately owned and operated - provided a better service, from the early 1920s onwards. Trams also fell out of fashion, not just in Southend but all over the UK, and with the infrastructure becoming worn out, closure became inevitable. The Boulevard section closed in 1938, followed by the seafront tracks in 1939. Full closure was complicated by the need to obtain road service licences for replacement bus services and the difficulty of obtaining replacement buses in wartime. However, as the population reduced dramatically, spare capacity became available in the Corporation's existing bus and trolleybus fleet and the Regional Transport Commissioner finally agreed to grant defence permits to allow the closure and bus/trolleybus substitution to go ahead.

The Southchurch line was curtailed in January 1942 (much to the frustration of the LRTL tour party visiting the following month!) and complete closure came in April as explained above. Much of the system went for scrap immediately, but even in 2021, sections of track were still being uncovered as part of road improvements!

I have hundreds of Southend tram photos but only two in colour - however this shot is not quite what it seems. I'd thought it was a colour photo but recent research by an archivist at the National Tramway Museum, Crich, Robert Morris, has identified that it is actually a colourised version of a monochrome photo taken by the well-known tramway enthusiast **WA ("Cam") Camwell**. The same is true of



the other colour shot I have.



It's at the White Horse in Southchurch on 6 June 1938, just a month before the Boulevard route behind the trams closed. It's not clear how or when it was colourised but I believe the colours are pretty accurate. Reproduced courtesy of the **National Tramway Museum**.



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Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964