

ESSEX BUS NEWS

March 2004

Issue 479



50 years of Eastern National Lodekkas

This view, demonstrates that the Bristol Lodekka gave you the best of both worlds - normal "highbridge"-style seating upstairs AND a scrape-free passage under the 13'6" bridge at Chelmsford Railway Station. 1438 (XVX 22) on Chelmsford town route 45. *R F Mack*

Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

serving Essex since 1964

www.essexbus.org.uk

Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group - Directory

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TIMETABLE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Join this scheme to receive Essex County Council timetable books and updates, plus a copy of the Thurrock Council book. Please contact Derek Stebbing for information or visit

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PHOTO SALES

We have photos of most operators and vehicles in Essex both past and present. Please write with requirements to:

Peter Snell, 6 Mandeville Way,
Benfleet, SS7 4LH

YOUR REPORTS AND OBSERVATIONS

Members reports, quality photos (prints or slides) and original articles are always welcome. Please send them direct to the relevant Sub-Editor.

The Editors exercise the normal discretion to publish contributions in full, in part, or not at all and cannot guarantee publication in any particular month.

Views expressed in EBN do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Group.

Every effort is made to ensure accuracy but the Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors published.

ESSEX BUS NEWS

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from the Editor ...

Addresses are now being printed direct onto EBN envelopes from an emailed computer file. This will save Membership Secretary, Derek Stebbing, time, the Group, money and will also avoid the possibility of loss in the post.

EBN 478 ~ corrigenda:

Page 23: Former Thamesway H385OHK was **374**, not 385. *Martin Farmer*

Page 24: Ex-Western SMT VR **3046** is outside the Chapel Hotel, Market Hill, Coggeshall, probably in the late 70s/early 80s. *Dave Edwards*

David Harman

Dates for your diary

MEMBERS' MEETINGS

- ▶ **Tuesday April 13** - talk/slide show "*EN AND THE LODEKKA*" by *Chris Stewart*.

All meetings take place in the **Pullman Suite, Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford** (adjacent to Rochford Station and also served by Arriva 7/8). Doors open **1930** for an informal chat; the main show takes place from **2000 to 2145**. Drinks available; 50p entrance fee.

GROUP TOUR

- ▶ **Saturday July 3** - North Norfolk. Make a diary note now!

RALLIES, OPEN DAYS etc

- ▶ **Sunday April 4 - Cobham Bus Museum Open Day**. The bus gathering will be at Wisley Airfield this year. This is one mile south of M25/A3 Jct.10, and is directly accessible from the southbound A3. Free bus service: Wisley Airfield-Cobham Museum-Weybridge Station. Visit: www.lbpt.org.uk
- ▶ Stephensons are planning an **Excursion** to the Cobham Gathering on **April 4** from the Southend/south Essex area. The choice of vehicle had not finally been decided when we went to press, but it will probably be one of the ex Lothian Olympians or possibly a coach. Departure from Rochford c.0830 with pick ups to be agreed as necessary, including Thurrock Services if anyone wants to drive to there.

Price will be **£15 including Cobham admission fee** (and including rides on the bus services running between Cobham and the Wisley site); accompanied children under 16 half price.

Bookings please by *e-mail* to richard@signal-training.com or *phone* **01702 588590** (*before* 2100 any day), stating your preferred pick up point.

- ▶ **Sunday April 11 - Barking Bus Rally and RT Road Run**: 11.00-17.00 at Barking Town Hall car park (off St.Paul's Road); 5 mins from Barking station (District and c2c lines) and local buses.
- ▶ **Weekend July 17/18 - Blackpool Tram Excursion** - Departs Saturday July 17: Shoebury, Renown (0500), Thorpe Bay Stn (0500), White Horse (0510), Queensway (0515), The Plough (0520), Leigh Elms (0530), Thames Drive (0535), Hadleigh Church (0540), Kenneth Rd (0545), Tarpots (0550), Pitsea-McDonalds

(0555), Trafford House (0605); arriving Blackpool between 0900-1030. Pick-ups at Rayleigh, Billericay, Shenfield and Brentwood can be arranged. Travel in 48-seat coach. Return from Blackpool at about 1700 on the 18th.

Cost £20, (payable by June 16), not including accommodation; coach will drop off/pick up at participants' hotels as required. More information from:

M.L.Evans, 73 North Ave, Southend, SS2 5H

Tel. 07746 779414 (after 2000 Monday-Friday); anytime at weekends.

First - VR Finale - extended !

VRs will now be used on the first two Saturdays in **March - 6th and 13th.**

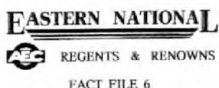
Timings are:

Ser 72 (BE depot, Car 9)	<i>first journey runs dead Braintree-Chelmsford</i>
Chelmsford departs	08.50, 11.50, 14.50 and 17.50
Braintree departs	10.25, 13.25 and 16.25
Ser 351 (CF depot, BMR Car 11)	
Chelmsford departs	06.55, 09.25, 11.55, 14.25 and 16.55
Romford departs	08.05, 10.40, 13.10, 15.40 and 18.05

Please note

- ▶ These are *planned* timings and cannot be guaranteed.
- ▶ Day rover tickets ("Essex Day") at £6.00 are valid all day on all *First* routes.
- ▶ For any updated information, check the website: www.essexbus.org.uk

NEW FACT FILE !



ESSEX BUS
ENTHUSIASTS GROUP

Eastern National AEC Regents and Renowns

Our latest Fact File, number 6, compiled by Alan Osborne and Peter Snell concentrates on a interesting collection of vehicles ranging over over 30 years. Although not devoted to an operator it is in the same format as previous volumes.

- Brief history of the A.E.C. Regent
- Fleet list of new and acquired vehicles
- Rebodying and engine changes
- Allocations and disposals
- 9 historic black & white photographs
- Westcliff-on-Sea appendix

Order your copy of the 24-page Regents Fact File by sending a cheque or postal order for **£3.50** payable to *Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group* to:

Alan Osborne,
7, Farley Drive, Seven Kings,
ILFORD, Essex, IG3 8LT

Vehicles into the fleet

By 22nd February, ex Stagecoach Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties H49/33F P546/51/3EFL had arrived but none had entered service by 6th March. We believe the following details are correct (temporary FEB numbers shown in brackets):

34011	(4313)	P551EFL	YV3YNA419VC027282	body no 5419	new 11/96
34012	(4316)	P552EFL	YV3YNA418VC027287	body no 5420	new 11/96
34013	(4317)	P553EFL	YV3YNA419TC027005	body no 5421	new 10/96
34014	(4318)	P554EFL	YV3YNA419VC027329	body no 5439	new 10/96
34018	(4312)	P546EFL	YV3YNA411TC027144	body no 5414	new 11/96
34056	(4319)	P556EFL	YV3YNA419VC027332	body no 5440	new 11/96

Darts 42488/9 have been given (short-lived) temporary fleetnumbers 781/2.

Fleet renumbering

As this column is written, the 40-year old fleet numbering scheme is about to give way to the national 'Sema Voyager' system, with reports already being received of new numbers. A full list will hopefully be given next month, together with current allocations.

Livery changes

As well as 781/2, previously unbranded Dart 775 now has lime green service 36 'Connection' markings.

Vehicle Workings

Chelmsford-Shenfield rail replacement log

8th Feb: CF2665 CF2668 CF2670 BE3072 HH4003 HH4004 CF4007 CF4012 CN4015 CN4016 CN4017 CN4018 CF4024 CR4301 CR4304 CR4323 CR4326

Chambers W124JDX NIBS H228LOM G601KTX G604KTX G607KTX

Stephensons TSO13X TSO15X TSO29X A890PKR (Western Greyhound colours)

15th Feb: CF431 CF2669 BE3219 HH4003 HH4004 CF4010 CF4012 CN4015 CN4017 CN4019 CF4024 CF4025 CR4302 CR4303 CR4305 DT4311

Chambers W124JDX NIBS BIL4710 H228LOM G603KTX G604KTX

Stephensons TSO13X TSO15X B752WSC

22nd Feb: CF 2679 HH4005 CN4016 CF4025 CF4033 CR4315

NIBS BIL4710 *Chambers* W124JDX

29th Feb: CF2670 CF2671 BE3219 HH4003 CF4012 CF4014 CN4017 CN4018 BN4038

CR4302 CR4305 CR4324 *Chambers* W89HRT *Stephensons* TSO29X B248NVN

NIBS G601KTX G604KTX G607KTX

Noteworthy sightings in everyday service include:

January

29th CF431 on 41/51

February

6th CR2921 on late 64s, CR651 on late 77s

7th CF2903 on 42, CF2823 and F2824 on 74

CR978 on Kelvedon-Witham shuttle (road closure owing to roadworks)

10th CF2907 on 42

11th HH410 on 2/25
 12th HH910 on 22, CF1518 on Diamond
 602 on 71
 13th HH750 and HH955 on 21
 CF1517 on 31X, CF431 on 43 (17.35)
 17th CF2665 on 45
 18th HH911 on 20
 19th CF730 on 352
 20th HH407, HH721, HH771 and an Olympian all on 20
 24th BN712 on 100
 25th CF2911 on Diamond
 BN969 on 8A
 26th HH773 on 20
 March
 1st HH773 on 15A, HH745 on 20
 2nd CF2906 on 43
 3rd CR610 on peak hour 71
 HH720 on 20, HH771 on 21

VR-watch



3219 at the "Red Lion", Margaretting on 14 February. *Chris Stewart*

Thanks to the splendid initiative by First Essex, enthusiasts have had a fantastic series of opportunities to ride on 3072 and 3219 before they are withdrawn from normal service (following which 3072 is to be retained as part of the heritage fleet). Visitors from Stoke on Trent, Plymouth, Bristol and the Isle of Wight have been amongst the more local followers celebrating 35 years of Bristol VRs with Eastern National, Thamesway and First Essex. In addition to their Saturday workings on the 72 & 351, and Sunday rail replacements, the pair has been the subject of regular (and very welcome) reports tracking many of their moves as follows:

3072 On 509: 24th Feb (with 4010 on 70X)
 3219 36: 12th Feb, 24th Feb (17.25 ex CD)



3072 leaves
Braintree depot
on 21 February.
Chris Stewart

- 42: 21st Feb (19.18 ex CD, covering failure of low floor Dart 740)
- 351: 12th, 18th, 20th Feb; 27th Feb (15.55 ex CD), 5th Mar (15.55)
- 507: 25th Feb
- 512: 9th, 26th, 27th Feb
- 525: 6th Feb, 23rd Feb, 3rd Mar
- 619: 10th Feb
- 620: 4th Mar

Big Cat Diary

The Leyland Lynx, once common throughout much of Essex, is now confined to the south and west of the County (although still sporting a variety of different colours). Reports of sightings are welcome now that only about half the original numbers remain active.

- 13th Feb: both 1414/5 were on 750, with 1420 on the 27
- 20th Feb: 1412 on 751, 1414 on 750
- 25th Feb: at least 1411/7/9/22/3 in use on services 2/25

Brentwood nearly always has one Lynx on the Doddinghurst-Brentwood County High School 860 and additional Hutton local 81 journeys which work off this, there is often one on the local 83 and there can be anything between one and four on the 750/751.

Other News

The following vehicles were stored at Clacton depot on 29th January:
1402/4/5/6/16/25/6/9, 2649/50/2/4/62/3/7/73, 4027/8, 4313/7 (see earlier), 9002
although 2662 has been in use from CF.

Also arrived at CN on 5th March for storage are *First London* Routemasters RML2291, 2369, 2374 and 2379 of which 2379 is marked as sold to "Zervian, Slovakia". These buses were stored in the non-operational former *Thamesway* Ponders End depot, and further examples were expected to arrive.

Sources: Own observations plus many thanks to M Austin, J Clayton, S Coates, D Edwards, M Farmer, M Jameson, P Mansbridge, S Menzies, D Moth, P Rowden, C Sigston, J Salmon, P Snell, D Stebbing, D Stewart, A Toms, R Webb, R Whitley, A Williams, Essex Bus and South West y-groups, First Essex, PSV Circle, Terminus

Chris Stewart

ARRIVA EAST HERTS & ESSEX Limited

Liveries

2/04: Arriva from Arriva London : 3334 (L124 YVK), 3398/9 (L118/9 YVK)
Branding for service 251 - 3356 (K406 FHJ)

General

Some of the Dennis Dart SLF at Debden outstation suffered vandalism damage in February. Consequently two Leyland Olympians from Arriva the Shires Watford depot were helping out from 17-23 February - 5113/8 (G283/8 UMJ)

ARRIVA SOUTHEND Limited

A new arrival here, first noted in use on 20 February, is another step-entrance Dart, **3154** - L154YVK with Northern Counties B35F body, ex Arriva Southern Counties. It was previously allocated to Northfleet and Dartford garages. It thus reintroduces Northern Counties bodies to the Southend fleet - the last went in July 2000 when the final Fleetline was withdrawn.



3154 (L154 YVK), originally in the Kentish Bus fleet, in Southend bus station, February 21. *Richard Delahoy*

Following the service revisions of October 26, route branding for services 7/8 and 9 was slowly removed from the vehicles concerned (although some were still running with this old branding in late February), along with the large Arriva fleetnames carried by some deckers below the lower deck windows. The route 2 branding had previously



Former Arriva South London Olympian L172 (D172 FYM), now Arriva Southend 5387, at Belgrave Road on February 21. *Richard Delahoy*

been lost from the Dominators as they had been repainted.

Just as slowly, starting in late January/early February, new branding started to appear on a variety of buses, using the route colours shown on the timetable leaflets, viz: 1 - red; 5 - royal blue; 7/8 - orange; 9 - mid green. The application involves a list of key points served by the route in white on the route colour background, applied on the cove panels of single deckers and either above (in the case of the Tridents) or below (on Olympians) the lower deck windows of deckers, together with frequency and fares information on the lower panels. Many buses have been noted with incomplete applications and the process is clearly on-going.

We will publish a list of branded buses once more are completed.

The date of change of the night bus service was the night of Feb 6/7.

Richard Delahoy

Heddingham

Contrary to what we reported last month, L333 is in the process of being converted to single door (2.04).

Due early March are:-

V250 BNV	Dennis Dart / Plaxton ex Fazakarley (Zaks), Birmingham.
PJ02 RHE	Dennis Dart / Plaxton ex Probus (Petes Travel), West Bromwich.

Essex Small Operator News

ADVANCE MINIBUSES, Hockley The series H... PPU is a reregistration series - H952 PPU should be shown as H952 PPU (ex ?????). X86 JOJ a Mercedes Benz 411D/Excel is in (by 1.04) ex Jenkinson, Bridlington, E.Yorks.

A & M COURIERS, Basildon W67 NTG and S450 YON both LDV minibuses were offered at Chelmsford auction during January

AMBER Rayleigh F862 FWB a Mercedes 609/Whitaker has gone to Tony Glew, Colchester (1.04).

APT Rayleigh K453 PHU Dennis Javelin/Wadham Stringer is in (by 1.04) N501 MWW Bova Futura is in (by 1.04) ex Reading 273 - but has not yet been seen this vehicle in service.

TIL 7224 (ex F59 JTA) DAF/Caetano is in (by 1.04) - not sure if being operated or if dealer stock only. (info from advertisement.)

BARKER Roydon RJ1 6569 (ex A409 JPB, WLO 471, A848 UGB) a Setra S228DT is in (by 1.04).

BROWN Basildon In by Feb 04 is Leyland Titan WDA 4T (in orange, white and yellow) this replaces another Olympian (for which no details have ever been recorded), this in turn had replaced GOG 95W a Metrobus.

BUS 2 BUS, Shoeburyness Seen at the operating centre of this new operator (1.04) were:- F751 KVV Ford Transit / Dormobile and F341 SEH Mercedes Benz 307D/PMT, last reported with Southend Radio Cars

CLINTONA, Brentwood New here in early March was Mercedes Vario/Plaxton SF04 HXL.

COLCHESTER COACHES, Clacton Leyland Atlantean XPG 182/4T are in from Talisman, Gt.Bromley (2.04) - 182 is for spares only.

FARGO, Rayne There is a new operating centre at Witham (2.04). It is off Crittall Road but this may not be the correct address. YN53 OZO is another Scania / Irizar (in by 1.04).

GROUP TAXIBUS, Chelmsford New Ford



Greenway ILL 4821 of **Locallink Buses** on the 38 Witham local route. The "Network Witham" branding appears to have been inspired by the, now discontinued, "Network Watford" of the bus's previous owner LDT Ltd. (now Arriva the Shires Ltd.).

Chris Stewart

Transits (1.04) are:- EN53 VDG; ET53 VHY (no. 33); ET53 VHZ (no. 57); ET53 VJA (no. 32); ET53 VJB; ET53 VJD; ET53 VJE (no.35). ET53 VJC (no. 34) is another Ford Transit (seen 2.04 but probably in 1.04)

Ford Transits V474 OHJ, X369 THK & Y539 FVX have not been seen for some time and are assumed to have gone.

HARRIS COACHES, West Thurrock

R989 TLD Mercedes Benz 0814D/ Autobus has gone (by 1.04) to New Century Travel, Thundersley

LOCALLINK, Stansted H172 RBO an Optare MetroRider is in (by 1.04) ex Thamesbus, Surrey. Dennis Dart EU03 EUD carries lettering for Witham town service 39, but seems to spend more time on service 502 (Romford-Waltham Cross)

NEW HORIZON, Alresford W192 RRE a LDV Convoy is in (by 1.04).

OLYMPIAN, Harlow All reference to Leyland Tiger/Berkhof B593 HFE should read B589 HFE (ex ROI 976, YFN 251, B123 KPF).

REGAL BUSWAYS Recently acquired is Leyland Olympian/ECW B203 DTU.

RONDA, Rochford TAZ 5286 (ex D219 LCY) a Mercedes 608D/Robin Hood was burnt out at the operating centre in the first week of January. (A Ford Transit G534 MGH was also severely burnt - ownership of this vehicle not known.)

SAINT CLOUD, Rochford Bristol

VR/ECW KOU 796P has been sold for preservation, but may appear on loan to local operators to cover vehicle shortages. It is to be repainted in a livery similar to that carried on Bova K651 EEV.

STANSTED TRANSIT A Dennis Dart, believed to be N5 BLU suffered accident damage, when a lorry collided with the rear end of it in Braintree.

STANWAY TRAVEL SERVICES,

Laver-de-la-Haye KV53 OGG a Ford Transit is in (by 2.04) - operates on a taxi plate - the body conversion is probably by Bernard Mansell.

STERLING EUROPEAN, Southend

Further to our note last month, when

visited on 10.1.04, the office at 49-51 Hamlet Court Road appeared to be in use, although no one was actually there, and the notices about the company having ceased had gone. On the same day, in the yard at Stock Road were RIL 8899 (ex ???), Volvo/Aleander F118 PHM, Scania/Irizar M258 TAK & LDV Convoy EO52 OZT - the other vehicles were not present.

Regarding T301 ROE, we are fairly sure that this vehicle was in Stephenson's yard on 10.1.04.

TALISMAN, Gt.Bromley MY53 TRA a Setra 415 is new 1.04 (read reg. plate as MY SETRA).

H643 PTW (ex 90-D-1057) Leyland Olympian/Alexander Belfast is in 2.04 ex Redby, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear. It arrived as H47/33F.

Dennis Dominator C721 NCD has gone to Baird (t.a. Prestwood Travel), Prestwood, Bucks. (2.04)

Leyland Olympians C520/2 LJR, C667 LJR have all gone to Mulley, Ixworth, Suffolk (2.04).

Former Colchester Atlantean/ECW YNO 785 is now minus its roof, but the job is not yet complete.

TOWN & COUNTRY, Grays Dennis Dart L110 HHV has fleet number 100.

TREBLE-TWENTY, Brentwood EX53 EJC Fd Tt Tourneo seen 2.04 operating on a taxi plate.

MISCELLANEOUS

NEW CENTURY TRAVEL This Kent based operator, keeps the following at Sadlers Hall Farm, Thundersley (1.04):-

E758 OWY Mercedes Benz 508D - had New Century lettering.

N946 CKJ Iveco - ? - no lettering.

P391 WYJ Ford Transit - no lettering.

R852 GMV Peugeot Boxer - had New Century names.

R989 TLD ex Harris Coaches, W.Thurrock - lettered for New Century.

EPH 232V Leyland Atlantean/Roe seen 1.04 in Sadlers Hall Farm - owner not known - had Amvale, Hull lettering.

F817 VEH Ford Transit/Dormobile seen 1.04 in the Harlow area - had PSV disc.

K40 TCC (ex K399 STL) a Setra seen (1.04) at Horseshoe Farm and in Harlow - thought to be with Kellys Travel, Harlow

L743 PDM an Iveco/Kei, this vehicle is ex Patterson, Birmingham, W.Midlands. It still has Pattersons names and is still in the yard at Woodham Ferrers late February.

P750 HTW Fiat/Atlas (ex Airport/Essex Buses 107) seen in Colchester area 2.04 with a green disc.

HIL8917 is a Leyland Tiger/Plaxton ex A203OCW. It is kept at Shot Farm and belongs to Dave Stubbingon. He is the son of Geoff, who for many years ran Bordabus and its associated fleets.

Q553 UOC is a Leyland Leopard ex LOA 843X new 1982 to Midland Red (Express) 843 with Willowbrook coach body. Following serious accident damage (late 1982 or early 1983), it was rebodied by Plaxton in 1984 and reregistered 7.84. Latterly First Midland Red 853. Present owner?? It has been seen in Brentwood on Schools work.

ESSEX - NON-PSV OPERATORS

ARNOLD (preservationist), Heybridge
BHJ 509S (ex UVX 4S) Bristol LH / ECW went to Spall, Dallinghoo, Suffolk (for scrap) on 12.1.04

FELSTED SCHOOL EX53 USE Ford Transit is in (seen 2.04)

KUC 988P Daimler Fleetline/MCW seen in 'Kingstons' yard at Rettendon (1.04) - lettered for Soundwell College - owner/status unknown.

IUI 4137 (ex LDA 864W, 8105 RU, WNH 141W) Volvo / Jonckheer, now a transporter, seen at Ipswich Road, Colchester (1.04). It is thought to have replaced APL777T.

Thanks go to Colin Sigston, Dave Arnold, Nigel Turner, Justin Marquis

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Routemaster RML2336/2614
Routemaster RML2327/38/81/2411/82/2556/7/2601
MCW Metrobus M976/8/1107/1436
Dennis Dart DP239
MCW Metrobus M409/655/935/1004/1045/1059/1065/1185/1392/3/6/1403/1429/1431.
Volvo B6 L837/8CDG. L402-6/8-13/15/16/19-21JBD. L432-5XVV. L451/4YAC
Leyland Olympian E906/23KYR

Stagecoach Gloucester:
 Stagecoach South:

 Stagecoach North East:
 South Gloucester Buses:
 Thandi Coaches:
 Waveney Playbus, Lowestoft:

Volvo B6 L279JAO. L437/41/2/5/7/50/2LWA
 Volvo B6 L248CCK
 Dennis Dart K557/8/71/6NHC,
 K584/6/7ODY.
 Leyland Lynx G619CEF.
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 Leyland Atlantean MNO63P, Olympian
 ARP617X, MCW Metrobus M448, M1370
 Dennis Dart DNL116. National 2 UPT680.
 Nationals FTN705/12/4W
 Metrobus GYE508W

Harpers Coaches, Derbyshire:
 Hedingham Omnibuses:
 Imperial, Rainham:
 Liverpool Bus Rental:
 Liverpool Motor Services:
 McColls Coaches, Balloch:
 National Stud, Newmarket:
 Pauls Travel, Huddersfield:
 PVS (dlr for scrap):

Olympians H980PTW [90-D-1034]
 H986PTW [91-D-1093]
 National 2 UPT678V, Metrobus D943NDA
 Bristol VR DWU294T
 Metrobus UTN510Y
 Leyland Atlantean YNO78S. RVW90W
 Volvo B6 L424/5XVV. L451YAC
 Olympian C818BYY

Red Route, Northfleet:
 S & A Produce, Hereford:
 Mr Colin Shannon, Manchester
 (playbus):
 South Gloucester Buses:

Southern Transit, Brighton:
 Specialist Spinners, Oxford:
 Swinton Youth Group:
 Talisman Coachlines, Gt Bromley:
 Thandi Coaches:
 Town & Country, Grays:

with thanks to Ross Newman of Ensignbus

Where are they now ?

Latest locations of former Eastern National (EN), Thamesway (TW) and Essex Buses (EB) vehicles. Part 2 of a major catching-up exercise, courtesy of *Dave Arnold*.

2253 F34TJN	Monaghan & Killeen, Saltash. gone.	04/03 EB
2357 UVX666	- ? - , Houston. untraced since 11/69.	11/69 EN
2379 WNO475	Prins, Ammerzoden, NL. ex Trump, Knaphill (preservation). [exported to NL by 11/98]	by 02/00 EN
2601 H601OVW	Erith Commericals, Crayford (dlr). ex First Eastern Counties fleet No 843.	01/03 EB
2602 H602OVW	Selvey, Cambuslang.	11/02 EB
2605 H605OVW	Jackson (t/a Leisure Travel), Baguley. now C25F.	10/02 EB
2611 J611UTW	Yorkshire Rider fleet No 9449. re-numbered 90086.	02/03 EB
2612 J612UTW	Yorkshire Rider fleet No 9450. re-numbered 90087.	02/03 EB
2613 J613UTW	Erith Commericals, Crayford (dlr). ex First Eastern Counties fleet No 840.	01/03 EB
2614 J614UTW	First Eastern Counties fleet No 901. Destroyed by fire.	03/03 EB
2617 J617UTW	To Jordan, Coltishall (dlr for scrap).	03/03
2618 J618UTW	Friedel (t/a Escourt Coaches), Enfield. Short, Wingland.	08/02 EB
	via Jordan, Coltishall (dlr). ex First Eastern Counties fleet No 970.	by 10/02 EB
2624 J624UTW	Erith Commercial, Crayford (dlr). ex First Eastern Counties fleet No 972.	01/03 EB
2626 J626UTW	Friedel (t/a Escourt Coaches), Enfield.	08/02 EB
2628 J628UTW	Whitegate Travel, Whitegate. Now C25F.	12/02 EB
2630 J630UTW	Evans (t/a Harry Evans), Welshpool. To Evans, Tregaron.	by 03/03 EB 04/03
2631 K631GVX	Fitzpatrick (t/a Freeway), Shaw. now C25F.	by 02/03 EB
2632 K632GVX	Oakland, Immingham. via Ramm, Sudden (dlr). now C25F.	by 06/03 EB
2633 K633GVX	Liquidator of Phoenix Student Travel Ltd. ex Phoenix, Witham fleet No 5050 [support bus as B6F].	10/03 EB
	To Talisman, Great Bromley [support bus as B6F].	12/03
2634 K634GVX	Liquidator of Phoenix Student Travel Ltd. ex Phoenix, Witham fleet No 5051.	10/03 EB
	To Talisman, Great Bromley (dlr).	12/03
2635 K635GVX	Whitegate Travel, Whitegate.	08/02 EB
2636 K636GVX	Cresswell, Moira.	01/03 EB
2639 K639GVX	Wilford (t/a Ted Wilford Coaches), Peterlee.	by 11/02 EB
2640 K640GVX	Liquidator of Phoenix Student Travel Ltd. ex Phoenix, Witham [not used]. To Talisman, Great Bromley (dlr).	10/03 EB 12/03

2736 183XNO	- ? - , Islamabad, Pakistan. Presumed gone.	by 12/00 EN
2748 EOO590	Western Greyhound, Newquay (preservation). ex Castle Point Transport Museum, Canvey Island (preservation).	03/03 EN
2805 BVX681B	B & B World Wide Production, Lanaken, Belgium. ex Worle Playbus Association, Weston-super-Mare.	03/89 EN
2814 GNO790B	Round-up Restaurant, Houston. untraced since -/81.	02/81 EN
2816 HEV994B	Kosjide, - ? - , Belgium. To unknown, Brussels reg FAZ457. Last noted 06/97.	07/83 EN 10/96
2823 JHK455C	Prins, Ammerzoden, NL. ex Hoare, Chepstow (preservation).	by 10/02 EN
2824 JHK459C	Boston Doubledeckers, Boston. gone.	EN by 07/90
2844 MVX881C	- ? - , Calgary. ex - ? - , - ? - . [lettered 'The London Deli' and was fitted out as snack bar on the lower deck and a restaurant upstairs] To Sally, Ottawa.	by - /86 EN exported 08/82 by 08/86
2853 OVX297D	Van Nood Reizen, - ? - , Netherlands. ex Top Deck Travel, London. To Leek, Monnickendam, Netherlands.	by 10/02 EN by 10/02



Former 2894 (WNO982F), with Massachusetts registration BUS-803, stands at Quincy Market, downtown Boston in 1987. But, is this really 2894? ENOC FLF's all had "T" destination screens and this has the two-piece arrangement. Besides, the short rear window indicates a 30ft, rather than 31ft version. This all suggests 2894's radiator cowl had been grafted onto another, non-EN FLF at some stage. No. 004 in the Boston Doubledeckers fleet. Livery - (inevitably) London red/cream. *David Harman*

2857	OPU822D reg ZH 254044	LONDAG, Wadenswill, Switzerland. ex Heddingham Omnibuses Ltd, Sible Heddingham fleet No L102.	- /89	EN
2877	STW765D	- ? - , Italy. ex Top Deck Travel Ltd, London.		EN
2878	SVX277D	The Kelly Family [music group], Germany. 1st report since 04/80.	by 05/03	EN
2891	WNO979F	Boston Doubledeckers, Boston. gone.	by 07/90	EN
2894	WNO982F	Boston Doubledeckers, Boston. gone.	by 07/90	EN
2895	WNO983F	Boston Doubledeckers, Boston. gone.	by 07/90	EN
2916	WWC746F	Boston Doubledeckers, Boston. gone.	by 07/90	EN
2917	AEV811F	Miyagi s Japanese Restaurant, Hollywood. gone.	- /01	EN
3039	PWC514M	Red Bus Rental, Tarzana. Seen 09/02.		EN
3081	STW 25W [ex BIL4710 STW 25W]	Linkfast Ltd (t/a Castle Point Bus Co), North Benfleet. ex Ensign, Purfleet (dlr).	02/03	TW
3088	STW32W	Lowe, Mereworth. ex Hoare, Chepsow.	by 08/03	TW
3119	XHK224X	S Munden, Bristol (dlr for spares). ex Bristol TV Film Services.	04/03	TW
3125	XHK230X	First Western National fleet No 1251. gone.	05/03	TW
4029	FUM497Y	Yorkshire Traction (for spares). via Hardwick, Carlton (dlr).	05/03	EB
4506	B694BPU	Crichton, Low Fell.		
5000	[ex A4HWD B694BPU] H116THE	gone. Phoenix, Witham fleet No 5000. ex Essex Buses Ltd fleet No 5000. To Liquidator of Phoenix Student Travel Ltd.	by 03/03 by 02/03	TW EB
5001	JTY371X	gone. Phoenix Witham fleet No 5001. ex Essex Buses Ltd fleet No 5001. To Hoare & Savage (t/a Red Kite), Tilsworth. via Ensign, Purfleet (dlr).	10/03 12/03 by 08/03	EB
5002	JTY382X	Liquidator of Phoenix Student Travel Ltd. ex Essex Buses Ltd fleet No 5002. gone.	10/03 12/03	EB
5003	JTY395X	Phoenix, Witham fleet No 5003. ex Essex Buses Ltd fleet No 5003. [used for spares]	by 08/03	EB
5004	JTY400X	To Ensign, Purfleet (dlr for scrap). Liquidator of Phoenix Student Travel Ltd. ex Essex Buses Ltd fleet No 5004. gone.	12/03 10/03	EB
5005	XWY478X	Phoenix Witham fleet No 5005. ex Essex Buses Ltd fleet No 5005. To Hoare & Savage (t/a Red Kite), Tilsworth. via Ensign, Purfleet (dlr).	12/03 by 08/03	EB

50 Years of Eastern National Lodekkas

In March 1954, Eastern National and its (by then) subsidiary Westcliff Motor Services took delivery of their first examples of the revolutionary Bristol/ECW 'Lodekka'. This was a groundbreaking lowheight double-decker design with normal-height internal layout and low floor, achieved by means an offset gearbox driving a drop-centre rear axle. Available only to the nationalised Tilling and Scottish Bus Groups, the 'Lodekka' evolved over the next 14 years during which time Eastern National amassed a fleet of 387 examples. 137 rear entrance LDs were followed by 2 broadly similar FS models; one unique 70-seat rear-entrance LDL6G prototype joined the fleet in 1958, followed by 247 front-entrance FLFs over the 9 years from 1960 to 1968. 15 rare FLF coaches included 5 of the 31ft semi-automatic FLF6LX variety, mechanically similar to 48 bus equivalents delivered at the same time. The very last of the coaches, 2614 (later bus 2946 and now preserved at Canvey), was delivered to EN on 16th August 1968. It carries the final chassis number of the 5,217 Lodekkas built (236.337).

Bus manufacturers had long sought to overcome the conflict between covered

roof double-deckers and the low height of many bridges, mainly those under canals and railways. Leyland produced and patented their lowbridge Titan as early as 1927, but to reduce body height by about 12ins (300mm) this involved a sunken upstairs gangway to one side with 4-seater benches set very close to the ceiling. Many buses were built to this design over the next three decades, but the drawbacks were considerable, both to the passengers and to the conductor. Gilford had a brave attempt at solving the problem with a prototype front wheel drive flat-floor double-decker in 1931, but sadly it was too far ahead of its time and disappeared into oblivion. Interestingly it was finished in Hillman's of Romford colours (although it never operated in service) - ENOC took over the residue of Hillman's in 1934 when London Transport compulsorily acquired the main Brentwood-Stratford route.

The Tilling group, of which both EN and Westcliff were part, benefitted from having its own chassis and body manufacturing companies, namely Bristol Commercial Vehicles and Eastern Coach Works at Lowestoft. After the Tilling group sold out to the state in 1948, only nationalised operators could take Bristol/ECW



Victoria Circus: a cyclist and a Corporation trolleybus overtake the prototype Lodekka LHY949 on demonstration to Westcliff Motor Services. Fortunately, the rather ugly front-end arrangement was not perpetuated on production models.

*Chris Stewart
Collection*

products, but this did mean the manufacturing companies could concentrate on designing providing vehicles to suit the Group operators. Both EN and Westcliff had long standardised on lowbridge double-deckers, not only to cope with numerous low bridges but also because many of the depot buildings could not accommodate highbridge buses (something of a 'chicken and egg' question arises here of course). The principal obstruction was (and still is) the railway bridge adjoining Chelmsford station, through which a number of frequent long-distance and local routes have worked since the 1920s. There were many other examples of bridges and depots, compounded by those acquired

from Hicks, City and Moore's (whose low-bridge Guys continued in use with EN until the last ones went in 1975). In the Midland area (later passed to United Counties), there were numerous similar obstacles, particularly at Luton.

The 1949 prototype green and cream 'Lodekka' LDX6B LHY949 operated on trial for both EN and Westcliff. Once production started in full in 1954, ENOC's first LDs were delivered as XVX19-25, with Westcliff receiving XVX26-31. XVX19 arrived from ECW on 12th March 1954, followed a week later by Westcliff's XVX26. The earliest Eastern National LDs were numbered in the 'National' series as 4208-14/27/8 before a complete fleet

Brand new, with Westcliff fleet-names and first-series fleet number painted/transferred-on: 4227 (XVX 26). Seen en route for Kent Elms Corner.

*Chris Stewart
Collection*



1431 (XVX 19) negotiates a roundabout and some period street signs on the trunk 11 route. An Ekco (radio and TV) Morris-Commercial van is in hot pursuit.

*Paul Harrison
Collection*





The droopy radiator grille on the early Lodekkas was replaced by a shorter and neater assembly on later deliveries. Southend-allocated 1509 (538 HVX), working a 25B to Highlands Boulevard, trundles along the sea front at Leigh.

*Paul Harrison
Collection*

renumbering took place in 1954, giving them numbers from 1431 upwards, and at the same time Westcliff was absorbed into Eastern National. The earliest 'Lodekkas' carried a third set of fleetnumbers from another renumbering in 1964, distinct vehicle classes being introduced at that time; the LDs formed the 2400 and 2500 series, the FLF coaches were 2600s and bus FLFs started at 2700 (eventually reaching 2931, excluding the coach conversions). Open top FLFs later became 2300s.

Notable amongst the rear-entrance 'Lodekkas' was LD6B 1489, later 2458 (320GPU); this was one of six LDs delivered experimentally in 1956 with the Cave-

Browne-Cave (CBC) heating system. The most obvious feature of this was the radiator which, instead of being at the front of the engine, was mounted in two parts either side of the destination box. The system was reintroduced on 1963 FLFs, becoming standard until the final 'Lodekkas'. 2917-31 and coaches 2610-4 reverted to conventional radiators, probably as a result of experience with overheating problems.

EN took Gardner 5 cylinder engined LD5Gs as well as Bristol 6 cylinder LD6Bs. Standard LDs were 27'6" long, although regulations were relaxed in 1956 permitting 30ft long long double-deckers. Bristol



An early view of 1491 (322 GPU) with gilt equal-height fleetname, waiting on the forecourt of Bishops Stortford depot.

*Chris Stewart
Collection*

produced six experimental 30ft Lodekka LDLs in 1957, but a much more radical prototype appeared in 1958; the second of two flat-floor air-suspension 'Lodekkas' became Eastern National 1541 (later 2510: 236LNO), and this unique 30ft rear-entrance bus has happily survived at the Castle Point Transport Museum on Canvey Island. Delivered new to Brentwood depot, 236LNO stayed there until 1973 before moving to Braintree (mostly for driver training, but also service use) and then CR from where it was withdrawn in 1977.

Following the success of the flat-floor prototypes, production of the new F series began fully in 1960. Four variants were

made available, but by far the most popular was the FLF, of which 1,867 were built for Tilling companies and the SBG. Arguably the finest FLF buses with EN came in 1967 with the 31ft semi-automatic FLF6LXs (2884 to 2931). Although the external body style was similar to previous vehicles, they were easily distinguishable because of their extra body length and forward-ascending staircases (not to mention the noise from the SCG gearbox). EN was the only customer for this longer variant beyond the Scottish Bus Group.

The FLF coaches mentioned earlier were bought for what became the X10 Southend-London express service and its

The Cave-Brown-Cave heating system meant grilles each side of the destination screens, the break in the upper cream relief band and an absence of opening windows at the front. Wood Green 1489 (320 GPU) picks up in Romford Market Place on the 'main road' (251).

*Chris Stewart
Collection*



Everyone's favourite bus: 1541 (236 LNO), the one-and-only 70-seat LDLX6G. Seen when brand new at Victoria Circus, also on the 'main road' 251.

*Chris Stewart
Collection*

The rear of a later FLF compared with the front of an early one at Halstead depot.

1966-delivered 2873 (RWC 945D) shows the absence of upper cream relief band and inverted "T" indicators. (which made it easier for the conductor to change the blinds from the lower saloon).

New in 1962, 2735 (182 XNO) shows the earlier two cream bands and the LD-style radiator grille.

Paul Harrison



variants, and for a number of years they brought new standards of comfort and prestige to these routes. By 1973, with the X10 demoted to a limited stop service (400) and one-man (as it then was) operation, they were surplus to requirements but not yet life-expired. Some were loaned to United Counties, and then all except one were subsequently rebuilt as 70-seat buses (numbered 2932-46). Incidentally only Croyville had similar full coach FLFs, although Thames Valley had coach-seated versions for their routes into the heart of London.

'Lodekka' withdrawals started in 1971, initially the LD6Bs because of a worsening spares situation for Bristol engines. Several were re-engined as LD5Gs, the same exchanges between Bristol and Gardner engines affecting FLFs later in life. The last LDs went in 1976 and FLF withdrawals started soon afterwards. Mass influx of Leyland Nationals displaced the later buses, RELs having ousted the earlier withdrawals. Rapid moves towards driver-only operation undoubtedly foreshortened the lives of the later FLFs.

The last FLF6LXs were withdrawn in 1981, mostly following the closure of Wood Green depot and the truncation of the ex City 251 route at Walthamstow together with its conversion to OMO VRs. FLFs continued in use from Chelmsford and Hadleigh until by September 1981 they

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Cherry Down, BASILDON, Essex. Phone 410/100 5082
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Synonymous with the 'Main Road' (151/251) for many years, an early FLF features on this timetable leaflet.

Chris Stewart Collection

Later Lodekkas had the "T" destination screens. In early NBC leaf green and white colours with the top relief band painted-out, Chelmsford-allocated 2520 (357 LPU) has just arrived at Maldon bus station from Chelmsford.

Chris Stewart



had all gone.

Five FLFs carried all over advertisement liveries in service - 2790 (AVX958B) for *Typhoo Tea*; 2791 (AVX959B) for the National Coal Board 'Come home to a Real Fire' campaign; 2804 (BVX680B) for *Bambergers (Eastern) Ltd.*; 2837 (LWC663C) for *Southend District HCVA Home Heating* and FLF6LX 2927 (AVW396F) for *Tesco Superstore, Pitsea*. All 'Lodekkas' for EN (and WMS) were delivered in Tilling green and cream (except for the coaches), many LDs, the FSs, LDL and all the FLFs later gained NBC green.

Although all of the single deck bus fleet had been adapted for OMO (the normal term at the time, although now

more properly called OPO) by 1972, there were only 24 such double deckers (VRs 3000-23). Deliveries of new vehicles at that time were very slow, and consideration was given to converting some of the many FLFs in the fleet. Consequently 2898 (WVX525F), which was awaiting repairs to fire damage sustained in Thundersley, was rebuilt at Central Works in the period up to September 1972, losing its CBC heating to make room for a driver's upper deck periscope as well as having its staircase reversed.

Following service trials with 2898, it was reported that up to 45 FLFs might be converted for OMO. In fact only a further 7 vehicles emerged; the next three were

FLF 2706 (86 TVX) seen in its latter years in NBC livery on Chelmsford town service 44B.

Chris Stewart



The FLF coaches were later down-graded to bus use. A recognition point was the shallow upper-deck rear window. The panel below obscured the coach seat head-rests originally fitted. 2945 (AVX 974G) at Basildon.

Chris Stewart



Relegated to driver training duties, and painted blue, former 2464 (882 GVX), now numbered 0882. Seen in Brentwood depot yard.

Chris Stewart

2924/6/7 (AEV818/20F, AVW396F), work being carried out at Central Works and Prittlewell Works. These particular vehicles were not fitted with CBC heating, making the conversion work a little easier. The next three were rebuilt at Marshalls of Cambridge, namely 2928/9/31 (AVW397/8F, AVX 973G). The last vehicle to be adapted was 2942 (AVW401F) in January 1974, with many of the modifications incorporated whilst undergoing conversion from a coach. Of these vehicles, though, only 2898 and 2942 saw much use as OMO vehicles.

Replacement for the remaining open-

top KSWs was considered in 1973 using former Brighton Hove & District FS6G convertibles. In the end this came to nothing, and the KSWs continued in use (one remaining in the fleet to this day). In 1978, though, FLF 2937 (RWC608) was converted to open top, entering service in NBC white with green relief. 2937 remained unique, though, retaining its chrome coach detailing; happily it has survived into preservation. Numbered 2300, it worked alongside the KSWs at Southend for the 1978 season. The following winter a further three FLFs were converted: 2863 (RHK348D) becoming 2301;

2848 (MVX885C) as 2302 and 2850 (NTW943C) as 2303.

No history of EN's 'Lodekkas' would be complete without mention of *On the Buses*, ITV's comedy series filmed using FLF6LXs in and around Wood Green. For studio scenes, a mock-up FLF was built by EN, using a number of body parts supplied by ECW. The resultant 'vehicle' normally carried registration number YDU265D, although this appears to have been swapped for various other numbers during filming. Fleet number 2552 was always reported to have been carried,

As already mentioned, the first Lodekkas to be withdrawn were LD6Bs with 2408-11/5/32/52/67/71/2/5/6 all being officially taken out of stock in September 1971. The following month 2428/31/51/8/68/93 were dispensed with, replaced mainly by new RELL saloons. The Scottish Bus Group decided at a very early stage to dispense with its early Bristol VRs, largely because of reliability problems; in the same year Alexander (Midland) arranged to exchange its entire fleet of 15, registered SMS31-45H, for a similar number of older FLF6Gs from EN. Accordingly 2865-73/8-83 became Alexander (Midland) MRD195-209, officially in October 1971.

One of the more exotic uses of redundant FLFs was by Top Deck Travel, a company which specialised in overland

travel to the Far East and Australia. They built up a large fleet of Bristol LD6Gs (consequently none came from EN) and FLFs, and also developed an operation in the USA. Heavily rebuilt inside to accommodate sleeping and eating accommodation, painted cream, orange and black, and given (sometimes cryptic) names, a number of EN vehicles served between about 1983 and 1996 when most operations ceased. Those known to have operated were 2710 (90TVX) 'TC' or 'Top Cat'; 2839 (LWC665C) 'Loff' ex Eastern Counties; 2853 (OVX297D) 'Viking'; 2875 (STW763D) 'Rush'; 2877 (STW765D) 'Stew'; 2892 (WNO980F) 'Wino'; 2900 (WVX527F) 'Da Bus' - now rebuilt for private hire use by Peter van der Merwe, Dordrecht, Holland; 2913 (WWC743F) 'Acko' and 2940 (KNO949C) 'Rafferty'.

Others survive - happily 2400 (XVX19), 2510 (236LNO), 2849 (NTW942C) and 2614/2946 (AVX975G) are at Canvey Museum whilst there are a good many others (mostly FLFs) still dotted around the world. Some are heavily modified, but 50 years on from the first LD's arrival the breed still lives on. And of course there is a strong family resemblance to the Bristol VR, the last examples of which have just made it in service to the 50th anniversary of Eastern National's first 'Lodekka' entering service.

Chris Stewart

Smartly presented in London Buses red: former 2900 (WVX 527F) is now with Peter van der Merwe, Dordrecht, Holland.
October 2002.

Chris Stewart

