

Essex Bus News

Issue 683

March 2021



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



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Above: The snow illustrated in a number of photos last month proved short-lived, with the temperature dramatically improving just as EBN 682 went to press on 15 February, and indeed, later in the month there were a number of spring-like days. But here is one more, picturesque, photo of a bus in the snow, Stephensons Enviro 200 470 (SN66 WLO) on route 14 outside Great Wakering church on 11 February 2021. **Steven Quyy**

Blue is the Colour

Partly by co-incidence and partly by design, there is a blue theme to (all but one) of the colour photos in this month's EBN. But even the bus in red & cream had previously been painted aquamarine!

Front Cover: Ensignbus's new Wrightbus low-height StreetDeck 166 (LX21 CHO) at Mardens on 23 February 2021. Details of this vehicle and six others are on page 25. Note the black front fleet names and also lighter shade of blue. The blue has apparently now reverted to that used on RT3232, whereas it had become a richer shade over the years. **John G Lidstone**

Inside Front Cover: Under Mark Howarth's leadership, in 1988 the post de-regulation Southend Transport adopted a brighter and more modern livery in place of the traditional blue and cream. A revised shade of blue was used, with white relief and a red band, as shown here on 702 (TPD 195M), at the Victoria Station roundabout in Southend on 7 May 1989, passing the back of the Victoria Circus Shopping Centre in the days when C&A were still to be found on England's high streets. Second-hand Leyland Nationals had entered the ST fleet a month or so earlier, 702 being the former London Country SNC95 which had started its service life in 1974 from Luton on Green Line 714. Ultimately Southend operated no fewer than 33 Leyland Nationals at one time, all being the shorter 10.3m model. Fast forward to November 2019 and Arriva Southend Volvo B7RLE 3816 was repainted into this heritage livery to recall those last years of Southend Transport. It was seen picking up at Southend General Hospital on 11 January 2020, before the bus was named Jan Roy in memory of a former member of staff. As reported last month, it has now been withdrawn from passenger service, but at time of going to press it was being used on staff shuttles (see also page 10). Both **Richard Delahoy**

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Owen stocks a wide range of colour photos, please send an SAE for details.

Subscriptions

A calendar year subscription is £22. 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 per month. For example, a member joining in March would pay £10 x £2, i.e., £20. Please contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road, Southend-on-Sea SS1 3TT
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Membership Records & Data Protection

A statement of our compliance with GDPR is available on our website or by post. For any membership or Data Protection issues please contact Richard Delahoy, address above.

Reports, Articles & Photographs

Members' reports, articles and photos (prints, slides or preferably jpgs) are always welcome. Please send to the Editor or relevant Sub-Editor. The editors exercise discretion to publish contributions in full, in part or not at all and cannot guarantee publication in any particular month.

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The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 10th and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the next month.

Views expressed in EBN 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 Members:

Steven Quay, Benfleet - 1180

David Smith, Silver End - 1181

Andrew Longhurst, Maldon - 1182

Richard Lewis, Maidstone - 1184

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

Firstly, Ray Palmer of Southend, member 540, who died in late February, just short of his 97th birthday. He was probably our oldest member. Ray had extensive transport interests, including railways and ships and had given various talks to the Group in previous years when we held regular meetings in Southend.

Secondly, J. R. (Jim) Young who, although not a Group member for some years now (Jim was not really interested in modern buses, the end of the 1970s was about his limit) was one of the founding members of the then Eastern National Enthusiasts Group in 1964 as member number 10. An obituary is expected to be included in the next issue of 'Buses' magazine. Jim had recently published a number of books which had been reviewed in EBNs 677 and 680. Alan Osborne, on behalf of Farley Publications, advises:

"Any orders for Farley Publications books should be sent to 7, Farley Drive, Seven Kings, Ilford, Essex. IG3 8LT. Please make cheques payable to A. G. Osborne. The price of Jim's books has now been reduced to £10 each including postage and packing. All orders sent to Jim at Southend have now been fulfilled and we thank you for your forbearance during this difficult time."

Thirdly, another Jim, member 1062, Jim Mckinnon, who was the Managing Director of Marden Signs and Designs. Mardens is a very well-respected company within the bus community and has repainted various First Essex and Arriva Southend vehicles into heritage liveries as well as repainting buses for many operators, plus repainting preserved vehicles, examples just in this issue are on the front cover, bottom of inside front cover and below. Jim was always very friendly and helpful. The business is continuing under the management of other family members. Mardens are the owners of preserved ex Southend Corporation Transport Leyland PD3 336 (CJN 436C) and this was used to transport family to Jim's funeral on 22 February. The funeral cortege stopped off at Mardens, where heritage liveried Arriva Southend 6499 also made an appearance with blinds suitably programmed. Photo below by **John G Lidstone**.



Group Notices (continued)

EBN Colour Content

Readers who have skimmed through this issue before reading this will have noticed the extra four colour pages in the centre. We have been able to use colour on the covers and inside covers for some time, but up to now all the other photos and illustrations have been in black & white. It would be great to use colour throughout (subject, of course, to still including historical b&w photos), but the cost is prohibitive and would require a substantial increase in subscriptions. However, reflecting our current financial position, the Committee have agreed that we will double the colour content in four issues each year, with the centre four pages in colour in the March, June, September and December magazines. The cost will be absorbed within existing subscriptions this year and we hope you like the result. The page count will remain at 36 pages (including covers) as this is the practical limit that keeps us within the standard Royal Mail letter rate - any more pages and the thickness would add significantly to postage costs.

We would welcome your feedback on the expanded colour content, please let the Editor know your views. Would you be prepared to pay say £2 extra on the annual subscription for 2022 in order to have 8 pages of colour **every** month?

Historical Articles for EBN

Richard Delahoy's article on Arriva Southend Tridents commences on page 18. This is a more modern historical article than usual, covering events of the 21st Century. We realise that not all our members are interested in half-cabs (someone aged 40 would never have seen an Eastern National half-cab in normal service!) and we aim to cover as wide a period as possible in our articles. So, we welcome submissions of articles covering all eras of Essex public road transport. As previously stated, we can help with supplying photos and with editing. We have received further information re four articles / letters in last month's EBN, on East Kent Regents in Essex, Halls Coaches, the PSV Circle Westcliff book and the Blind Spot mystery. We will include follow ups to the first two in future issues, a follow up to the third is on page 5 of this issue and a follow up to the fourth is on page 27.

The Running Card by Owen Woodliffe

South East Bus Festival, 10 April 2021, at Kent Showground, Detling. Further to EBN 681, this event has now been postponed, the organisers are hopeful of staging it later in the year.

Below: The rail replacement operation between Frinton-on-Sea and Clacton-on-Sea from 20 February to 14 March 2021 is reported on pages 29-31. **Robert Appleton's** photo shows Panther Travel BIG 7758 (ex W758 DWX) Volvo B7TL / Alexander ALX400, ex First Essex 30903, on layover at Frinton-on-Sea Station on 24 February.



Book Review

Westcliff & City Fleet History

Further Comments by Alan Osborne

Thank you to **Richard Delahoy** for his excellent and most pertinent review of the PSV publication in last month's EBN. He mentions the fleet summaries and the 'Snapshots in Time' feature of the Group's 'Fleet Records' that quickly highlight the changes through time. In this context it is interesting to compare the ENOC and WMS fleets when they were combined. At the time of the renumbering on 18 July 1954, ENOC contributed 239 vehicles against WMS's 277. In 1953, WMS carried 50.4 million passengers compared to the ENOC figure of only 41.5 million. So, despite what some people may think, WMS was in no way the minor party in the merger.

Richard also commented that there were several deficiencies in the history, such as no fleet details of Rochford & District. There is another major deficiency, that is not mentioned at all, but is covered in my own 'Outline History' volume, this is their coaching interests in East London. In the list of garages there is no mention of the WMS premises at the rear of 188-210, Hoe Street, Walthamstow which housed the coach fleet.

In September 1948, WMS was required to submit to the BTC valuations for all of their properties. These were:

Fairfax Drive, Prittlewell	£19,000
Hoe Street, Walthamstow	£7,910
Broadway, Hadleigh	£4,500
London Road, Southend	£106,872
Oak Road, Hadleigh	£3,500
Pier Hill, Southend	£17,500

The Hoe Street premises were purchased from Henderson Hire Services in 1930 and then leased to Messrs Holmes & Smith (Directors of WMS) at a rental of £550 per annum. H&S, trading as Black & White Pullman Coaches, then assumed responsibility for the WMS coaching activities. In June 1938 the rental was transferred to Sydney Smith (Black & White Coaches) at 55, Selbourne Road, Walthamstow. Sydney Smith resigned from the WMS board on 31 December 1948, the premises then being disposed of.

The extended coach tours operated by Westcliff were most highly regarded, indeed Eastern National continued to use the Westcliff-on-Sea fleet name to adorn Bristol LS & MW coaches based at Prittlewell into the 1960s. An example is shown below, 481, 280 NHK, new in 1959 (**Richard Delahoy collection**). Why was this important aspect of their operations not included in the fleet history?



683 for EBN 683



Above: Eastern National 2329 (TNO **683**), Bristol KSW5G ECW L27/28R, on Braintree town service 321. Driver and conductor at the Boleyns Avenue terminus in conversation after the conductor had changed the destination blind to Skitts Hill. Photo taken early in 1968, the bus was withdrawn that August. **Ian Pritchard**. A photo of a much more modern looking bus on this route only a year or so later, Bristol VR 3002, was included on page 29 of last month's EBN.



Left: 43483 (R**683** DPW) was one of many second-hand single-deckers, a lot of which had First Eastern Counties connections, purchased by First Essex towards the end of the 2000s decade and the first half of the 2010s, in order to speed up the introduction of low floor operation, but most of which were replaced by new buses in the lead up to 1 January 2016 as they did not meet the conditions of PSVAR. 43483, a Dennis Dart SLF / Plaxton Pointer 2, was acquired from FEC in November 2012 and had been allocated to Braintree depot when it closed in 2015. It had an eight-month reprieve as a driver shuttle at Colchester (with its front destination blind overpainted magenta) before being sold to Alpha Recovery in August 2016. It had been the

last Dart at Norwich and arrived in Barbie livery, but with 'First' fleet names removed and a 'Norwich Network' name on the nearside above the doors, which it still had when photographed at Chelmsford Bus Station on route 70 on 17 March 2014 (**Adam Kelleher**). FEC had originally had the batch 480-489 (R680-689 DPW) which had '43' added as a prefix when they were renumbered into the Sema sequence; as well as 43483, 43480/2/4/5/9 were also acquired by First Essex, although not all were in service at the same time.



Above: Photos of 2681 and 2682 have featured in the last two issues of EBN and here is the next in sequence **2683**, in the later 'Anglia' livery of yellow with a green skirt. However, this bus is somewhat different to the others, being one of only two of the large fleet of Thamesway / Eastern National / Essex Buses Mercedes 709D minibuses that were not purchased new (the other one, 2677, L21 AHA, had in fact been meant to be new to EN but was diverted then later acquired, its complicated history is explained in 'Fleet Record Volume 3'). 2683 was the last of this type and was unusual in having high-backed seating. It had been new to Cheshire Bus & Coach in August 1996 and was acquired from Procter, Bedale, in July 1999 for use on Essex County Council Village Link service 2, as seen here in Jackson Road, Clacton, on 1 July 2002, when traffic on that road was in the opposite direction to how it is today. Most of the Eastern National

Mercedes 709Ds had matching fleet and registration numbers, for example, 2681/2 were registered P681/2 HPU; by sheer co-incidence acquired 2683's registration of P689 HND was only six numbers out.

Adam Kelleher



Left: The direction of travel on Jackson Road was switched on Sunday 7 January 2007, and whilst there were new bus stops introduced on the road in the opposite direction, the (almost) parallel Pier Avenue became the main departure point for most bus routes. First Essex Scania L94UB / WrightBus Solar 65**683** (YR52 VEU) is seen there on route 7 to Walton (on the) Naze a decade later on 20 October 2017.

Robert Appleton

Service Revisions

by Paul Harvey

with thanks to LOTS, Essex, Hertfordshire & Suffolk County Councils, Omnibus Society (Eastern Branch) & Richard Delahoy

The County of Essex (including Southend & Thurrock unitary areas) remains in National Lockdown with schools returning on 8 March 2021, bus operators increasing some timetables to reflect essential travel and school travel only.

4 November 2020

808 Brentwood Community Hospital to Shenfield & Warley (M-F) **Brentwood Community Transport**
Reduced timetable operating hourly between 0915 & 1515.

8 January 2021

3 Tillingham to Chelmsford (Alternate F) **Fords Coaches**
Shopping service suspended.

15 January

6 Burnham-on-Crouch to Chelmsford (Alternate F) **Fords Coaches**
Shopping service suspended.

8 March

Vectare - 14 Waltham Cross to Upshire Shops (M-F) - new service providing four / five journeys off peak.

Arriva Kent Thameside - dedicated school journeys reintroduced on certain services in Colchester, Harlow & Southend areas, more info in Arriva report on pages 10-11.

Central Connect - school journeys introduced on services 351 (Hertford to Bishop Stortford) & 386 (Stevenage to Bishop Stortford).

Ensignbus - continue to operate Saturday service on all routes weekdays with some additional journeys. Additional school journeys introduced on services 22, 25, 44 & 73.

First Essex - all school services and dedicated school journeys reintroduced. Frequency increases on most M-F timetables. Service 27X (Canvey to Benfleet Station) three journeys reintroduced. Service 71E (Chelmsford to Colchester) renumbered to 72. X30 (Southend to Stansted Airport) additional school peak journeys introduced. Park & Ride service remains suspended.

Go Ahead Chambers - all services revert to normal M-F timetables, but Saturdays continues on reduced temporary timetables.

Go Ahead Hedingham - services 3 (Clacton to Harwich), 4 (Clacton to Jaywick) & X76 (Jaywick / Clacton to Colchester) new temporary timetables introduced to cater for school pupils. Services 88 (Colchester to Halstead) & 89 (Braintree to Great Yeldham) normal M-F timetables reinstated with Saturdays continuing on reduced timetable.

NIBS - all services will operate to pre-Covid service levels.

Stephensons - all services will operate to pre-Covid service levels.

9 March

133 Colchester / Braintree to Stansted Airport (D) **Arriva Kent Thameside**

The 0800 from Stansted to Braintree will operate 10 mins earlier and serve Colchester Institute Braintree Campus at 0845. The 0700 & 0805 from Braintree will operate 10 mins earlier.

26 March

78 Brightlingsea to Colchester (Sch) **New Horizon Travel**
School service withdrawn.

27 March

Ugobus (Essex CC)

HB01 South Woodham Station to Wallasea Island Nature Reserve (Sun) - new leisure service with 3 journeys.

HB04 Maldon Jersey Road to Layer Breton Abberton Reservoir VC (Sun) - new leisure service with 5 journeys.

HB05 West Mersea Melrose Road to East Mersea Ivy Lane (Sun) - new hourly leisure service.

HB06 Layer Breton Abberton Reservoir VC to Rowhedge Ship Yard Corner (Sun) - new hourly leisure service.

The above seasonal leisure services are scheduled to operate April to early September, but their introduction may be delayed due to Covid 19 restrictions.

6 April

62 Highwood (Chelmsford) to Blackmore (M-S) **Vectare Ltd**
New service one journey in each direction.

First Bus News

First Bus have announced that no diesel buses will enter service after 22 December next year and that from 1 January 2023 they are going to buy 1,000 emission free buses (although no timescale is put on that). In March 2021, to reflect the split from the North American operations, the website address changed from firstgroup.com to firstbus.co.uk.

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 2020/21 (24 January - 20 February)

33077 BN (oos)-Disposal, 33178 BN (oos)-Disposal, 33402 FG-HH, 37139 CR (oos)-CR, 67162 BN-CF, 67902 CF-BN

Disposals

33077 and, as reported last month, 33178 to Ensignbus, 33077 then on to Shelton Motors, Ely, for scrap, February 2021. Further to last month, 33190 from Ensignbus to Shelton Motors, Ely, for scrap, February 2021.

Area News & Workings

Colchester

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CR except where stated. All dates February 2021 except where stated.)

Further to EBN 682, 32068 and 41521 have been repaired and both were on driver shuttles on 17 February. But 32068 then failed whilst on route 64 on 19th. 66970, one of the reserve fleet due to the 24 January service reductions, was back in service w/e 13 February. Another from reserve, 32087, was back in service on 19th on route 65 with 32478 seen on 174/175 on 24th and 32477 on 88 the next day. 66759 has had its 'York' fleet names removed (as has sister 66760 at Basildon).

News of the Harwich routes (8 February-7 March). On 8th, routes 103/4 were experiencing delays of 20 minutes due to snow and icy roads. Very few double-deckers operated on the 103/4 during this period, only four were seen. 37005, 37037 and 37054 were all seen on 11th, 37005 again on 17th and 37140 on 27th. The Saturday timetable introduced on Monday to Fridays from 25 January continued until 5 March. Worked by three buses, apart from 37140 noted above, only single-deckers were seen, with a mixture of all three types allocated to Colchester, StreetLites (seven seen), B7RLEs (eight seen) and Enviro 300s, with the Enviro 300 being the dominant type, 11 of the 12 allocated to Colchester were noted, 67750 was the one not seen. With all schoolchildren returning to school on 8 March, a new Monday to Friday 103/104 timetable was introduced on this day, requiring four buses in the morning peak up to 1000, then reducing to three buses for the rest of the day.

Chelmsford

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CF. All dates February 2021 except where stated.)

Park & Ride Enviro 200 MMCs continue to operate on normal services. As an example, the following have been seen on route 36 in South Woodham Ferrers: 67189 (20th), 67190 (16th, 22nd & 24th), 67191 (10th, 15th, 22nd & 23rd), 67192 (8th, 11th, 12th, 17th, 24th & 26th), 67193 (10th & 11th) and 67196 (9th & 11th).

Basildon & Hadleigh

Routes 94/A continue to be mainly StreetLite operated, three exceptions seen being BN33552 on 8 February, BN33545 on 17th and BN33549 on 6 March.

Right: As a follow up to the photo of 32260 on route 9 in EBN 682, here it is again, this time in Hanging Hill Lane, Hutton, on 20 February 2021, but now with its 'Bristol' fleet names removed.

Chris Stewart



With thanks to R Appleton, S Barham, J Bence, J Collins, D Edwards, J Podgorski, C Stewart, First Essex, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.



by **Peter Mansbridge** with thanks to Richard Delahoy, Matthew Evans,
Keith Sadler, harlowride.co.uk, Flickr and Bustimes

Vehicles

Mercedes Benz Citaros 3891-97 (BU06 HSD-G/J-L) and 3909 (BD12 DHV) have transferred from **Harlow** to Guildford. Their use on service 724 is no longer possible following the introduction of a daily charge by TfL on non-Euro VI emission standard commercial vehicles entering Greater London from 1 March. Route 724 enters the TfL Low Emission Zone in the Uxbridge area. Replacement vehicles have arrived in the form of eight Alexander Dennis Enviro 200 MMCs, comprising 4093/5-9 (YX17 NYG/K-O) from Maidstone and 4101/2 (YX17 NYS/T) from Gillingham. The arrivals from Maidstone wear the latest Arriva light blue livery, with 4096 named Zara Bowman and 4098 named James Hall. Those from Gillingham are to Sapphire specification and wear Arriva Sapphire livery. 4101 retains route branding for service 700 (Chatham - Bluewater). The last week of Citaro operation on the 724 was the week beginning 8 February, bustimes.org recording the last Citaro operated journey on the 724 (and from Harlow depot) as being on the morning of Sunday 14 February by 3897. The new arrivals from Kent follow on in fleet number and registration sequence from the Enviro 200 MMCs 4076- 4087 delivered new to Harlow in 2017.

At **Southend**, previously withdrawn Southend Transport heritage liveried Volvo 3816 has been unexpectedly resurrected for staff shuttle use and was first noted as such on 11 March. It is rumoured that it may become a permanent driver trainer in due course. Dart / Caetano 1564/5 remain on loan from Colchester to Southend as previously reported. Park & Ride Enviro 200s 4072/3 remained in store at Southend but both were noted back in service at Southend on school duplication from 8 & 11 March respectively; the others of that batch are currently still at Colchester and are not required for service whilst the P&R site remains closed but can be used on staff shuttles.

Meanwhile, at **Colchester** four Darts went on loan to Guildford depot from the weekend of 6/7 March, these being:

1558 KX56 HCP, 1559 EU56 GVG - Dart / Alexander Dennis

1562 RX07 KPG, 1563 RX07 KPJ - Dart / Caetano.

It is not known how long they will be at Guildford, where there is an increased PVR from 8 March.

School Services

With the return of schools to normal attendance from 8 March, school duplication restarted at Southend but with a slightly greater use of internal resources, and also commenced at Colchester. As we went to press, the situation appeared to be as follows:

Colchester: one bus each on routes 1 and 2 (the duplicates running as S1 & S2), a single journey each way, using fleet vehicles / drivers.

Southend: duplicates are running on routes 1, 6, 7, 8 & 9. 'Internal' means operated by fleet vehicles with Arriva drivers and seemingly open to the public; 'external' indicates journeys run by other operators, S numbered and only open to school pupils (although, as seen in the photos on the next page, the 'S' is not always displayed). Based on Arriva publicity and observations from the first few days, we believe the position to be:

Morning peak: Three internal duplicates. Three external, provided by:

M&M Staffing x 1: service 8;

Grange Travel (Gravesend) x 1: service 7;

Vectare x 1: service 7.

Afternoon peak: Four internal duplicates. Nine external journeys covered by eight vehicles, provided by:

Peter Godward Coaches x 2: services 6, 7 & 8;

M&M Staffing x 1: service 1;

Grange Travel (Gravesend) x 2: services 8 & 9;

Vectare x 3: services 1 & 7.

Vehicles seen so far have been:

Peter Godward Coaches: VDL SB180 / MCV YJ60 GDU, now repainted white with fleet names, as seen on the next page, previously it was in Edwards of South Wales livery, as illustrated in EBN 681. It has now been joined by similar YJ60 GFZ, also ex Edwards;

M&M Staffing: dealer hired StreetLite DF SN68 AGF;

Grange Travel (Gravesend): MB Turismo BV70 UBR (used previously) and Yutong TC9 midi-coach YG68 TJU, as seen on the next page;

Vectare: Irizar coaches YN55 PXD (seen previously) & YN55 PXW, Mercedes Vario / Sitcar midi-coach SF04 ZLV, all three in full Gardner Travel livery / fleet names; Volvo B7RLE/Wrights BK13 NZM (in as acquired blue livery with no fleet names) and Mercedes Sprinter WN69 FYL (seen previously). Then from the afternoon of 11 March, an Optare Versa demonstrator appeared, OP07 ARE, in a blue promotional livery for Optare.

This takes the tally of different vehicles observed on hire to 36 since last September.

The previous Arriva operated double deck working on 7 (as S7, to & from Ashingdon Schools) and the school extra on 29 (as S29) are currently not running.

Other Services

Colchester has continued to see disruption to service 133 due to road closures in Rayne and with Braintree Road closed between Little Dunmow and Great Dunmow from 28 February until 3 March, buses diverting via the B1417 and B1008. In Colchester itself, services of all operators were affected by the closure of a main town centre road, St John's Street, from 2 February for a month, buses diverting via Southway.

Below: Approaching Southend Travel Centre on 8 March 2021, more details on previous page, both **Richard Delahoy**.



by Mark Lloyd with thanks to John Podgorski and the Hedingham website

Acquired Vehicles

OU57 FGV Alexander Dennis Mini Enviro 200, B29F, from Carousel, fleet number 502.
Arrived mid-February at CN, reported being prepared for Hedingham repaint and use. Going to press it was reported that another Enviro 200 had arrived at HD. More details below.

Significant Allocations

295	KN	520	CN - KN by 14 February, back at CN by 5 March
296	CN	523	KN - CN by 7 February

Fleet news

OU57 FGV reported above has been transferred from Carousel Buses, it was originally new to Thames Travel. It arrived in Countyrider livery. Countyrider are Carousel routes 580/1/2 centred on the Iver, Denham and Uxbridge areas on which the Enviro 200s were commonly used. OU57 FGV had formed part of an intake of five Enviro 200s by Thames Travel in 2007 and is sister to OU57 FGZ and OU5 FHA also used by Hedingham. FGZ is now 294 in the Konectbus fleet and FHA is 298 at Clacton. The odd one out of the batch, a full-length variant, is currently 266, OU57 FKB, also at Clacton. This leaves OU57 FGX from the batch unaccounted for, but it is not currently listed with Carousel Buses fleet. Another Enviro 200 had reportedly arrived at HD early March, to be confirmed.

588, PJ02 RBY, has been fitted for OPO use from 24 February. On 5 March, 262, EU58 JCI, returned from repaint into new livery, as seen right at Clacton on that day (Bradley Clot).



Service news

On 7 February, Clacton town services 3, 4, 5 & 6 finished early due to the snow and on the next day initially depot access was affected. On 8th, route 3 was suspended but most other routes ran although with curtailments, keeping buses on better road conditions. On 9th, service 3 resumed but most services were sticking to the main roads with some smaller roads still inaccessible. Generally, services got back to normal by 10th, but ice continued to remain a problem for passengers in Clacton.

Crouch Street, Colchester road works have been ongoing for the majority of February, with the road closed immediately after the bus station exit meaning Head Street or Crouch Street heading buses divert via Stanwell Street, Southway, St Botolph's Circus, Southway to Headgate. Services affected being Hedingham 50, 74, X76, 82, 83, 88 and 92 and Chambers 84, 754 & 784. The road reopened on 4 March.

Due to the return to schools on 8 March, Hedingham commenced revised timetables on the 3, 4 and X76 services. All other Clacton town services remained unchanged. Other changes were the 88 & 89 services reverting to normal timetable M-F with Saturday services still as emergency timetables. School routes 16A, 19, 901-4 and 910 also resumed. Chambers services 236, 374, 750, 753, 754 and 784 reverted to normal M-F timetables with Saturdays remaining as emergency timetables. School routes 237, 373, 751, 752, 756, 757 and SC707 all resumed.

Other News

Hand sanitizers have been fitted to buses in the fleet for added customer protection.
Sad news is that after years of delay, demolition of the Tollesbury depot to make way for the planned housing development has finally started.

by **Richard Delahoy** with thanks to the companies

A short-term vehicle swap saw NIBS Enviro 200 419 transferred to Rochford and replaced by Stephenson's Enviro 200 435 for the first week of March only, the latter for use on NIBS service 269. 435 is seen below in Brentwood High Street on 1 March 2021. **Chris Stewart**



All services returned to normal timetables from Monday March 8, including the restoration of school services, with coach duplicates for various local bus routes as applied before Christmas.

Below: As reported last month, Enviro 200s 438, YY15 FZC, and 439, YY15 FZD, have been acquired. Both are currently in store at Rochford, awaiting preparation for service. 439 is seen on 28 February with 438 alongside. **Matthew Evans**





Bus Operations of Galleon Travel, Roydon

by **Adam Kelleher** with thanks to Robert Downton, Tony Higgs, Ross Newman, Owen Woodliffe, Bus Lists on the Web and Flickr

Acquired Vehicle

LJ09 KPG Alexander Dennis Enviro 200, B29D, new to Arriva London ENL44, 06/09

From Arriva London, via Ensignbus, February 2021. It remains all red. Seen on Great Northern rail replacement service to Alexandra Palace at Gordon Hill Station on Friday 26 February. LED display fitted between 27 February and 11 March, replacing roller blinds.

Re-Registrations

Optare Solo WX05 RU0 was seen on route 5 in Harlow on 5 March re-registered to SGZ 2223. Sister WX05 RUC has also been re-registered and is now SGZ 2221.

Disposals

In EBN 681 it was questioned whether YN05 WKE did really go to Croft Coach Travel, Stockton on Tees, in August 2020 as it was now with Klarners Coaches of Colchester. However, in last month's 'Other Operators' section, it was reported that Klarners acquired it from Buses 4 Sale, Stockton on Tees.

Services

Due to difficult trading conditions and the future uncertainty cast by the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, Centrebus have taken the decision to cease operations from Stevenage Depot. A substantial number of routes operated from Stevenage will be transferred to Luton which is approximately 16 miles away. Centrebus have operated from the Whitworth Road base in Stevenage since 2007, providing a mixture of commercial, subsidised and school services throughout this time and employing around 50 employees at the site. The last day of operation from the site is expected to be on Saturday 10 April 2021.

From 11 April 2021, the following Centrebus services which are funded by Hertfordshire CC will be operated by Central Connect: 308/380 Hertford to Cuffley; 378/379 Hertford to Stevenage; 333 Pinehurst to Bengeo; M1/M2/M3/M4/M5 Ware Town services. Other ex-Centrebus services will be operated by Richmond's Coaches, A2B Travel Group and Chiltern Automotive.

During lockdown, off peak journeys on route 420 have been operated by single-deckers. As examples, Scania SGZ 1089 was seen on 18 February 2021, Tempo YJ11 EHW on 25th and, below at Two Brewers, Ongar, Tempo YJ11 EHH on 2 March. **Robert Downton**





Above: As reported last month, Vectare have a new Mercedes / EVM Cityline, RX70 SKZ, numbered 204. It is seen above in Brentwood High Street on 9 February 2021. **Chris Stewart**. On loan is Optare Versa demonstrator OP07 ARE, in a blue promotional livery for Optare. First seen on Arriva Southend school duplication on the afternoon of 11 March 2021. See Arriva report on page 10 for details of other vehicles used on these services.

Left: Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus 303, BK13 NZS, was illustrated in EBN 681 whilst working on Arriva Southend school services. It has now been repainted to a new Vectare livery of two-tone blue and fitted with white LED displays, as seen left at St Margaret's Hospital, Epping in February 2021. **Vectare** (many thanks to the company for permission to use this photo). Sister 302, BK13 NZR, has also been repainted into this livery, although it retains orange LED blinds, seen on route 13 on 5 March. New route 14 commenced on 8 March between Upshire and Waltham Cross, providing new links to Paternoster Hill. NZR operated this route on the first day. Also on this day, BK13 NZM was on route 61.

Photo Feature: First Essex / EN Alexander Midland Connections



Not quite another heritage livery, but 32669, 32673 and 67779 were acquired by First Essex in Midland Bluebird livery. This is reminiscent of the blue with cream band livery worn by Bristol VRs 3005-3019 (SMS 31-45H), which were acquired from Alexander Midland in August-October 1971 in exchange for a similar number of FLFs; repaints of these into green began the following June. All three of 32669, 32673 and 67779 were painted into this livery by First Scotland East, 67779 was acquired direct from them in November 2018, but the other two were acquired via First West of England in February last year. The two Geminis have retained this livery, as seen on 32669 at Head Street, Colchester on 23 September 2020. The barriers alongside the bus are part of new cycle lanes opened under the 'Safer, Greener, Healthier' post-Covid scheme introduced last summer, which included banning most traffic from the High Street.

Regarding the blue VRs, **Richard Delahoy** writes: "In the pre-internet and text messaging days, news of bus developments relied on word of mouth or waiting for the long production cycles of 'Buses' magazine or our next News Sheet. I'd been up to London on the Eastern National 400 service from Southend for a day's spotting and bus riding on Saturday 4 September 1971. On the way back from King's Cross, our 400 diverted into Basildon garage for some reason which I can't recall now, and to my amazement, inside was a Bristol VR in blue and cream. I had no idea that a swap of 15 of these for a like number of EN's FLF Lodekkas was taking place. I didn't record the number of that bus but did find sister 3017 in Southend depot and a member of staff told me that it would enter service the next day on the 400. I duly returned to SD depot the following morning on my bicycle and was delighted to capture 3017 exiting the bus station, on its first trip in service with EN."





67779 only ran in Midland livery for a couple of weeks before the livery was amended to an overall advert for Contactless Payments (nearside and rear) and the First Bus App (offside). **Robert Appleton** managed to photograph it before it was changed, at Highwoods, Colchester on 6 December 2018, whilst the amended livery is seen at Colchester Bus Station on 7 September 2019. **Adam Kelleher**

Incidentally, this livery was short-lived with First Scotland East, they have now adopted a version of Urban 2 livery similar to First Essex's, with white at the front, but two shades of blue at the rear instead of purple.

Photo of 32669 on previous page by **Richard Delahoy**.



And, of course, the FLFs that went to Scotland in exchange for the VRs also acquired Midland Bluebird livery. **Richard** continues "Four years later I had my first bus spotting trip to Glasgow, with a particular emphasis on finding the ex-EN FLFs. I recall that the trip also took in other tourist hotspots such as Barrow-in-Furness, Whitehaven, Workington, Jarrow, Stockton on Tees and Middlesbrough! One of the FLFs I found was MRD 208, ex-EN 2882 (UEV 220E), with a KH (for Kirkintilloch) depot plate on the front, in the rather grim surroundings of Dundas Street Bus Station, Glasgow, on 8 November". 2882 was one of only three E-suffix registered vehicles that EN ever owned (2881-2883, UEV 219-221E) and all went to Scotland as part of this exchange.



The Case of the Disappearing Tridents

Nearly 21 years ago, in June 2000, Arriva Southend took delivery of 15 brand-new Dennis Tridents, yet they only had a short life in the town and today are almost completely forgotten. **Richard Delahoy** tells the story.



Towards the end of its time in Southend, 5442 passes the Royals Shopping Centre on 2 September 2004 as seen by **Richard Delahoy**. Little did he know then that this bus would still be around 14 years later and looking superb in the colours of Pilkington Bus of Accrington. It was photographed there on 10 July 2018 by '**Gobbiner**', taken from his Flickr page and reproduced here with permission. It was sold the following year but still survives, as explained later in this story.



As we entered the new millennium, the local Arriva fleet still included 15 elderly Leyland / Daimler Fleetlines, well overdue for replacement. With low bridges at Hockley Station and Rectory Road in Hawkwell on the 7/8 routes, the choice of suitable new buses was limited. The Fleetlines being replaced were all 33' long with 80/82 seats and Arriva sought a similar capacity replacement.

The result was an order by Arriva for 27 Dennis Tridents with Alexander ALX400 low height bodies. Fifteen of the buses were for Southend and the other twelve for Luton, all numbered in a common series, 5421 - 5451 with corresponding W-XXX registrations (that's 31 numbers by the way, but there was no 5430, 5440, 5444 or 5450 as the registrations with those numbers were held back by DVLA to sell, being deemed to be memorable numbers; a recent search of MoT records shows none still in use and it may be that they were never actually issued).

The intention was to replace all the remaining Fleetlines in one fell swoop and to upgrade the trunk 7 & 8 routes to low floor, hoping that the new buses would generate an increase in patronage. With 15 buses, this was the second largest batch of new buses ever delivered to Southend at the time, first place being held by the 26 Fleetlines that had similarly introduced a step change in the fleet back in 1971. The Tridents' record was to be eclipsed in 2016 when 18 new Enviro 400 deckers came, but that's jumping ahead somewhat in our story.

The buses were on the long wheelbase version of the Trident and the Alexander bodies featured a mid-ships half-length bay, in the fashion of London RMLs. As delivered, the buses seated 82 - 51 over 31 - but all were down-seated upstairs to improve the legroom, by the removal of one pair of seats on each side, becoming H47/31F. 5437 was displayed to the public on 13 June 2000 in the pedestrian precinct at Victoria Circus and they then all entered service between 4 and 7 July. They quickly ousted the Fleetlines, 5321/33-9/41-7, the last one, 5339 (MRJ 239W) running on 14 July, complete with hastily applied commemorative poster for its final trip. The age profile of the fleet changed dramatically for the better as a result, with the average age dropping to 6.2 years.



Emphasising their length and the short mid-ships bay, 5435 again, Short Street, 28/6/00.



They were the first low floor double deckers for Southend, in the sense of being wheelchair accessible, but ironically, the Fleetlines they replaced also had no steps at the entrance as they too were low-height models. Likewise, the AEC Bridgemasters and Leyland Lowlanders which preceded the Fleetlines also had step-free entrances. The Tridents were to be the last new buses here with conventional roller blind destination displays, but were fitted with power winding gear, so that all the drivers had to do was to key in the relevant code and hey presto, the blinds set themselves. This was a feature quite widely used in London but one that

didn't seem to catch on much in the provinces.

The blinds themselves had barcodes printed on the reverse, which a magic eye read to ensure the blind stopped in the correct place. One downside was that they could not easily be updated to cope with any service revisions, although pretty much all the required destinations were available, with 71 entries (including two blank rows which could presumably have had inserts stuck on if necessary). Jumping ahead again, all of the Tridents that saw service elsewhere were later fitted with electronic displays after leaving Southend.

Although primarily intended for the 7 & 8 group, Shoebury to Rayleigh via Rochford (and actually comprising routes 7, 7A, 7C, 8, 8A, 8B & 8C), the buses quickly appeared on almost all the routes then operated by Arriva Southend. Bold route branding for the 7 & 8 was applied to the sides and rear of eight buses (5434-7/9/41-3). This had to be modified from September 2001 when the 8 was diverted via Wakering, with hasty action needed to correct an unfortunate misspelling of that place as *Wrakering*! (See photo right). Later in 2004 a new, rather understated branding was applied instead, this time on 5434-9-41/2, reflecting the corporate style Arriva were using at the time.



We don't have detailed records of their daily allocation, but for example, in autumn 2002 the standard plan was for nine on the 7/8/8A group (supplemented by the four Dennis Lance SLF saloons on 7A to give a low-floor guarantee on that corridor), two on 9 (four on Saturdays), with two more on peak hour duties, leaving two to be used as required or for maintenance.

One particularly unusual working was on the day of the 2001 Southend Bus Rally, 3 June, when Stephenson's had arranged for a number of operators to provide guest buses on seafront route 67, as shown a little later. Other unusual workings included a couple of journeys on the London service, rail replacement at Colchester and appearances at some of the more obscure termini, including Lower Hockley, Paglesham and Foulness.

Sadly, the fleet was reduced rather dramatically when 5448 & 5449 were burnt out in a fire in the parking area of the Short Street depot on the night of 26 September 2003. The fire appeared to have started in 5448 which was parked at the end of a row, adjacent to the perimeter fence, and then spread to 5449 alongside. Luckily other buses were able to be driven out of harm's way. As far as we know, the cause of the fire was never established. Eventually the more insecure parts of the bodies were removed, and the hulks were craned onto low-loaders and removed for scrap the following April.



No longer 'serving Southend'; or indeed anywhere else, this was the scene the day after the fire. 5449 is still just identifiable.

There had been at least two earlier engine fires in Southend's Tridents - I don't have precise records but do recall that one resulted in a section of Chichester Road having to be resurfaced, where the tarmac had been melted. The bad luck was to continue in later life (jumping ahead again) as after 5451 was transferred away to Ware, it suffered fire damage there on 27 December 2007 and was withdrawn, only to be resurrected, taken to Garston for a rebuild, painted orange and transferred to Milton Keynes, re-entering service there in September 2008, only for it to catch fire again on 1 December that year! That, as far as we know, was the end of its career.



On 20 April 2004, the remains of one are craned onto a low-loader for the final trip to the scrapyard.
Matthew Evans.

All other photos are by **Richard Delahoy**, except as otherwise credited.

Back to Southend, replacements for the two burnt out buses were elderly ex-London Olympians C32 CHM and D172 FYM, numbered 5386/7 here. Of course, these ECW bodied buses were not low-height and were restricted to service 29 to Belgrave Road, enforced by having special blinds that only had displays for 29 and the 1, 4, 4A & 13 - in practice, they rarely strayed from the 29 and a school contract.

Sadly, the shiny new Tridents didn't herald an upturn in the fortunes of the 7 & 8 routes, the hoped-for new passenger generation didn't materialise, and the decision was taken to move them to other parts of Arriva where they could earn a better return. Arriva Southend had recorded a net loss in each year 2001-4. The transfers out were fairly protracted (largely waiting on the availability of much older Olympians, E/F/H registered, as replacements), starting in September 2004, with the last to go - 5443 - leaving on 10 May 2005. Thus ended low floor double-deck operation at Arriva Southend for the next eleven years.

Seven of the Tridents (5434-9/41) went to Maidstone, lasting until withdrawal in 2014/6. Somewhat ironically, 5436 then reappeared in Southend, but only for storage in the scrap dump. The other six still intact (5442/3/5-7/51) transferred to Ware but by around 2013/4 were all at Luton (except for the hapless 5451, the double fire victim, as noted above), joining the others that had been new there back in 2000. They lasted there longer than might have been expected, indeed 5445 was still in use in mid-March 2021 on normal services and schools at Luton, despite the lockdown, along with 'native' 5423/5/7-9 - not bad for buses that are now in their 22nd year.

But perhaps the most unexpected survivor was - or rather, is - 5442. Withdrawn from Luton, it was sold to Pilkington Bus of Accrington by March 2017 and ran there initially in Arriva livery, minus fleet names. But somewhat astonishingly, it was repainted into Pilkington's attractive red and cream livery by mid-2018 and looked very smart indeed, as illustrated at the start of this article. However, you won't find it there now - as Alan Pilkington explains, "We sold it to a charity in Leeds in 2019 who have taken all the running gear out of it and put it in a forest for the homeless". Subsequently it was spotted parked alongside a factory building in Huddersfield on 22 January this year, reportedly with a homeless charity but with no sign of any conversion work yet undertaken.

Meanwhile back in Southend again, after the Tridents departed, half the fleet was still double-decked, comprising 26 Leyland Olympians and eight Dennis Dominators. The Dominators left in 2007 and a large cull of Olympians (replaced by second-hand Scania and DAF saloons) reduced the double-deck fleet to just eleven from October 2008. A progressive decline saw just four left at the start of 2010, dropping further to only two from May 2010. Then in May 2012 the last ones left, resulting in an all-single deck fleet for Arriva Southend for the first time in the history of the undertaking (from the start of the trams in 1901, the Southend Corporation Transport fleet had always been predominately double-deck). It was not until September 2016 that deckers reappeared, in the shape of the 18 brand new Enviro 400s referred to earlier (6499-6516). But that's another story.

Ironically, as this article was first being prepared, Arriva in Southend were once again using a Dennis Trident on most schooldays, as during the autumn of 2020 M&M Staffing's PNO4 XDK was operating a school duplicate, as illustrated in EBN 678 and described in the Arriva notes in various recent issues. And of course, there are still many Tridents to be seen locally as First Essex have operated the type for the past 11 years and have recently acquired three more ALX400 bodied examples, as also reported in recent EBNs.



Branding contrasts: 5443 displays the original bold between-decks branding as it leaves Southend Central Bus Station on 25 May 2002, while 5436 shows the second, more minimalist style (with the glue marks of the old branding still showing through) on 20 March 2004. The driver has a "look no hands" pose as the power blind winds through to find the correct display for his next trip. 'Rayleigh Station' will eventually be selected, the 7 doesn't go to Hadleigh.



Arriva Southend's Trident fleet in summary. All were new in June 2000.

Fleet no.	Registration	Left Southend	Initial fate	Final fate
5434	W434 XKX	8/04	To Maidstone	Withdrawn 4/14 after accident & scrapped
5435	W435 XKX	10/04	To Maidstone	Withdrawn 7/16 and presumed scrapped
5436	W436 XKX	9/04	To Maidstone	Withdrawn 9/16 and presumed scrapped
5437	W437 XKX	11/04	To Maidstone	Withdrawn 10/16* and presumed scrapped
5438	W438 XKX	1/05	To Maidstone	Withdrawn 7/16 and presumed scrapped
5439	W439 XKX	9/04	To Maidstone	Withdrawn 7/16 and presumed scrapped
5441	W441 XKX	12/04	To Maidstone	Withdrawn 7/16 and presumed scrapped
5442	W442 XKX	??	To Ware	Luton, withdrawn 2/17, then Pilkington Bus
5443	W443 XKX	5/05 - last to go	To Ware	Luton, withdrawn 6/19, disposed of 10/20
5445	W445 XKX	9/04	To Ware	Luton, still in use there 3/21
5446	W446 XKX	9/04	To Ware	Luton, withdrawn 5/17 & disposed of
5447	W447 XKX	1/05	To Ware	Luton, withdrawn 8/17 & disposed of
5448	W448 XKX	Removed 4/04	Burnt out at Southend and scrapped	
5449	W449 XKX	Removed 4/04	Burnt out at Southend and scrapped	
5451	W451 XKX	4/05	To Ware	Milton Keynes, caught fire 12/08, presumed scrapped.

* 5437 also operated briefly from Northfleet from 7/16 until withdrawal.



The most unusual working for one of Southend's Tridents was on hire to Stephenson's for a special trip on part of seafront route 67 on the day of the Southend Bus Rally in June 2001. I have driven hundreds of buses, but this was the only day I've ever conducted one. Here I am at the Shoebury East Beach terminus with 5442, my Almex machine and cash bag at the ready. Matthew Evans was my driver on this trip.

Other guest buses appearing on the 67 that day were Fords Coaches' MRJ 239W - one of the Southend Fleetlines that the Tridents had replaced 11 months earlier, Arriva Colchester Lynx H256 GEV, Cedrics of Wivenhoe's ex-M&D Bristol VR FKM 881V and The Delaine's East Lancs bodied Olympian T6 OCT. I managed to conduct each of those in turn for their single round trips, as well as driving Stephenson's own ex-Southend Tiger coach A249 SVW which performed alongside the usual open top. That might explain why I took so few photos that day of the rally itself!

Thanks to Matthew Evans, LOTS, the M&D & East Kent Bus Club and Pilkington Bus for their assistance with this article.

This report starts on Monday 8 February, the day after Storm Darcy hit East Anglia with freezing east winds bringing snow and ice, and drifting snow on many country roads. Some schools that had been open for children of key workers were closed completely, e.g., East Bergholt High School was closed on 8th and 9th, reopening on 10th.

Ipswich Buses ran a Sunday service on Ipswich town services on 8th and 9th. All country services were suspended, including Ipswich - Manningtree 92, Ipswich - Colchester 93/A and Clacton - Mistley 2/A. Colchester routes 4 & 11 did operate with ADL Enviro 200 70 (YX59 BZL) and Optare Versa 149 (YK08 EPF) on 8th and Enviro 200s 70 and 71 (LX58 LMO) on 9th.

On 10 February normal services were reinstated as far as possible. Enviro 200s worked into Essex: 102 (SN16 OGH) on Ipswich - Manningtree 92, 75 (GD10 MVM), 101 (SN16 OGG) and 107 (YX66 WCL) on 93/A, 105 (YX66 WCI) on Langham - East Bergholt High School 194. 71 and Versa 152 (YK08 EPV) were on Colchester routes 4 & 11. This was not without problems, e.g., service 92 was unable to serve the Brooklands Estate in Brantham. Buses on service 93 were delayed due to an accident closing the A12 at the Dedham / Langham junction, so a third Enviro 200 was used to maintain the service. Clacton - Mistley 2/A remained suspended.

On 11 February Clacton - Mistley 2/A restarted with Enviro 200 71 used. On 13th, the strong east wind was blowing snow off fields causing drifting on minor roads. Service 2/A did operate but was unable to serve Little Bromley due to this. Then from 15 to 20 February Bentley Road, Little Bromley was closed for drainage works, so 2/A was diverted away from Little Bromley via A120, Horsley Cross, Clacton Road, and Long Road, regaining the normal route in Lawford.

During the remainder of February, routes serving Essex continued to be worked by Enviro 200 and Versa single-deckers. A Scania OmniCity occasionally worked 1610 Suffolk One - Colchester 93 and 1715 Colchester - Ipswich 93, or 1610 Suffolk One - Manningtree 92 and 1720 Manningtree - Ipswich 92. However, on 5 March Scania OmniCity 33 (YR61 RRV) spent a whole day working on 93/A Ipswich - Colchester.

In EBN678 it was reported that the three Enviro 200s acquired from Bus Eireann had been named. Since then, the other Enviro 200s acquired in the autumn of 2020 have also been named: 70 (YX59 BZL) is Fflur, 73 (YX59 BZN) is Gwenhwyfar, 74 (DU60 LOJ) is Wilfred Owen and 75 (GD10 MVM) is Anne Atkins.

On 13 February Scania OmniCity 31 (YR61 RPY) worked rail replacement services for Greater Anglia on the route Marks Tey - Colchester - Clacton.

Over the weekend of 13-14 February, Ensignbus hired three buses and six drivers from Ipswich Buses to operate London Underground Central Line replacement service CL6 between Woodford and Hainault. The buses were the three Mercedes Citaros: 153/154/155 (BF65 HVT/HVU/HVV). 153 is seen below at The Monkham's Inn in Buckhurst Way, Roding Valley on 13th (**Andrew Colebourne**). The former West's Coaches garage was adjacent to the pub and the residential building that was built on the site can just be seen on the left of the picture. More details of these services are on page 29.





Dealer Stock Movements February 2021

Vehicles In

From **Arriva London**: Enviro 200s LJ58 AUE/AVE, LJ09 KOX/KPA/E-G/K/L/N/O/R/T-V/X-Z/KRD-F, GN08 CGO/U/V/X-Z/CHC-H, GN58 BUP/U/V/LVA/B.
From **Bath Bus Co**: Volvo B7Ls EU05 BZM/VBL/VBO
From **First Essex**: Trident LR02 LYX - this was First Essex 33178 - see page 9
From **First Leicester**: Volvo B7Ls KVO2 VWA/VVY
From **Go-Ahead London**: Dart Y986 TGH, Volvo B7TL LX54 HAU
From **P Lee Services**: Volvo B7TL LX54 HYS
From **Stagecoach Highlands**: Volvo B7Rs SP56 EBV, SV56 BVT, PX59 CVC, Volvo B12Bs SV08 GXM/P
From **Stagecoach Midlands**: Tridents PX04 DOU/DPK
From **Tower Transit**: Volvo B9TL BF62 UYK, Enviro 400s SN12 AVZ/AWA/C/EHB
From **Wrightbus**: StreetDeck SK68 TNJ

Vehicles Out

Volvo B7RLE SK07 CFU: **Aintree Coaches**
Volvo B7RLEs SN57DCF/U/V/Z/DDE: **Als Coaches, Liverpool**
Dart Y986 TGH: **Bear Buses, Feltham, Middlesex**
Volvo B7TL LX54 HAU: **Candy Coaches, London NW1**
StreetDeck SK68 TNJ: **CT Plus Yorkshire**
Versa YJ60 KGG: **Dreamline Travel, Blackburn**
Volvo B9TLs BJ11 DUH/DVN/O/T: **Faresaver Buses, Chippenham, Wilts**
Enviro 200 LJ09 KPG: **Galleon Travel, Essex** - see page 14
Enviro 200s LK08 FLG, LK58 CSX/Y/CTE, YX58 DWD: **Keepings Coaches, Mountain Ash, Wales**
Volvo B7RLE SK07 CFY: **Kirks Coaches, Coventry**
Enviro 200s LJ09 KPR/T/U/KRD: **Panther Travel, Harwich**
Enviro 400s SN12 AVZ/AWA/C/EHB: **RATP London**
Volvo B7R SV56 BVT: **Seaward Travel, London**
Enviro 200s SN08 AAU/V/ABK/AEC: **Squarepeg Buses, Leeds**
Volvo B7R SP56 EBL: **THZ Ltd, Heston**
Trident MX54 MPV: **Weberbus, Bedford**
Volvo B11RT BX16 CLV: **White Lion Coaches, Adestone**

To Shelton Motors for scrap

Tridents LN51 GNF, LT52 XAA, PX04 DOU, LX55 EPP. LN51 GNF and LT52 XAA were First Essex 33077 and 33190- see page 9.
Enviro 400s LX56 ETF/U.
Volvo B7TLs V194 OOE, KP51 WCW, LT52 WUK
Enviro 200s LK07 BDX, SK07 DXF, SN57 DWX, SN08 ABX/ADV
Versa YJ60 KGP
MANs LK07 AYC, LK57 AYN/EHS
Volvo B9TL FJ58 CON

Ensignbus Fleet

Volvo B7TL 101 sold to **Warwickshire Travel**. Volvo B7TL 110 sold to **P Lee Services, St Ives, Cambs**.
Enviro 200 716 sold to **Faresaver Buses, Chippenham, Wilts**.

New are seven Wrightbus StreetDeck low-height double-deckers, originally built for Arriva Yorkshire but not delivered, due to issues at Wrightbus prior to the sale of the company to Bamford Bus Company. They are 161-167 (LX21 CHH/J/K/L/N/O/V) which had been due to be Arriva 1571/0/67/6/3/1/0 (SN69 ZXE/D/A/WZ/W/T/S); ZWW/T were actually registered thus in September 2019 but did not leave the factory with these marks. Body numbers are AS494/5/8/9/502/4/5 respectively. They were acquired in Arriva's Sapphire livery, but all are due to be repainted at Mardens before entering service from 1 March 2021. 166 was the first to be finished, on 23 February, and is illustrated on the front cover. They have Daimler-Benz OM934 4-cylinder engines. They will increase the number of Euro VI engined standard vehicles to meet London ULEZ requirements.

Other Operators

by **Roger A Smith** with thanks to Richard Delahoy, Alex Hazell, Flickr and the PSV Circle

Airport Bus, Stansted Airport

BX65 WBK and BX65 WBL, both Scania K360EB4s with Caetano C49FLT bodies, have gone to Hills' dealers in Melton Mowbray.

Barker, Roydon

FJ56 PFK, a Scania K34 OEB4 with Caetano C49FLT body, is here from Southern Coach Lines, Newbury, Berkshire.

Don's, Dunmow

New is DH21 DON, a 61-seat PSVAR compliant Mercedes Tourismo coach, which entered service on 7 March on rail replacement between Audley End / Stansted and Broxbourne, driven by **Alex Hazell**, who took the below photo at Audley End. Former First Wessex Scania OmniDekka 36006, YN05 HGA, has now entered service, re-registered to DD05 DON. Ex Gloucester Minibuses Volvo B9TL / Alexander Dennis Enviro 500 LW55 AHV, new to Dublin Bus as VT1 (07-D-70001) is now BIG 8728 and is being prepared for repaint from Dublin Bus livery, whilst the previous BIG 8728, the Leyland Olympian Triaxle, has reverted back to J646 CEV and been sold.



Peter Godward Coaches, Wickford

A second VDL SB180 / MCV Evolution B36F ex Edwards of South Wales is YJ60 GFZ. It was noted on rail replacement from at least the end of December, initially in Edwards' blue, but like sister YJ60 GDU, is now repainted white with Godward fleet names.

Hardiman, Carvey Island

M860 TYC, a Van Hool C49FT bodied Volvo B10M, has gone from here.

Roman Coaches, Colchester

This operator's licence was not renewed as of November 2020 and all vehicles have gone from here.

St. Margaret's Travel, North Weald

This operator's licence has been revoked and all vehicles have gone from here.

Tendring Travel, Thorpe-le-Soken

FJ56 PFD, a Scania K34 OEB4 with C49FLT body by Caetano, is here from Craig, Scotland West.

Right: On 22 February 2021, **Alan Moore** was on his daily exercise when he saw Tendring Travel Scania N94UD / East Lancs YV03 PZH, new to Metrobus, fleet number 438, parked up on Prince's Esplanade, Walton-on-the-Naze. The next day it was parked in the car park at Walton station. It is likely it was involved in the Frinton-Clacton rail replacement, see pages 29-31.



Blind spot - Rose Bros. follow up

by Richard Delahoy

The 'Mystery - solved' piece in the February magazine generated some interesting feedback from members.

Our blinds expert **Bob Williamson** comments that dayglo (note corrected spelling) blinds didn't come in until about 1992 but suggests that the yellow lettering on the Rose Bros blind offered on eBay was likely to be a special tint to reflect the operator's livery and fleet name of Primrose Coaches. He cites a similar example in the 1960s with Thames Weald, where the entire blind was tinted blue to match the livery. I don't recall that one, but I did photograph a Thames Weald bus, HMK 140B, a Plaxton bodied Bedford VAS 29-seater, with a display that was blue lettering on a cream background (again reflecting their fleet colours), both in Dartford and in Romford. The Romford shot, taken in South Street on 15 July 1978, is on the inside back cover in colour, a close-up is below. The blind reads:

Tunnel Express
Romford - Hornchurch - Aveley
Dartford - Knatts Valley - Sevenoaks.

If you've never heard of Knatts Valley - and I hadn't - look it up on Google maps - it is an area east of the A225 between Eynsford and Otford - two places I *have* heard of!

We have notes of an interview by David Harman with Thames Weald's owner, the renowned Dr Nesbitt Heffernan, at <https://www.signal-training.com/ebeg/Heffernan.pdf>. And there's more on the Thames Weald operations in Philip Wallis's book *London Transport Connections 1945 - 1985*.

Returning to yellow blinds, I see that I ordered the first yellow on black blinds for Stephenson's Coaches from McKenna Bros in 1990, although that was just an ordinary yellow, not dayglo, the latter being quoted for by 1994. Bob adds that after some years it was found that the yellow was fading out (I can certainly concur with that) and McKennas developed an improved dayglo coating, marketed as 'McKennaglo'.

David Reynolds has a copy of a listing that Bob had made of a Rose Bros. blind and this is the same as the one we showed last month, except for the final entry, which appears to be an addition - on Bob's version it is 'Schools' whereas on the eBay listed one, it is 'Wethersfield (Contract)'. David also notes that on the one that Bob saw, the lettering slopes in the opposite direction - the one I illustrated would have been used on the offside of a coach, whereas the opposite slant would have been needed for a nearside display.

Nigel Turner wonders if the Wethersfield entry was for a service from the Chelmsford area to the USAF base at Wethersfield or even a school contract to the base - there is a file in the Essex Record Office that has records of USAF Dependent School Contract Routes to Wethersfield for 1956-7 and 1960-1 but doesn't say who operated them (and we can't look at it right now). It would appear that some air base staff were housed a long way from the base, as Nigel has this rare 1952 handbill for an Eastern National express service from Mersea Island to Wethersfield, a distance of over 30 miles. Were there other routes like this?

He also mentions that in the late 1950s, Moores of Kelvedon ran journeys to take young ladies to Wethersfield at weekends for recreation, Rose Bros could perhaps have done something similar, although we are not aware of any licence for such a service or contract. Or indeed, what the 'recreation' consisted of!



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D-Day15 February 1971

by Chris Stewart

With the move away from cash payments, greatly accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, half a century ago saw a major change (pun not intended) in money handling with the introduction of decimal currency in the UK. The once-familiar 10/- note had been supplanted by the new 50p coin of equivalent value from 1969, and the half-crown (2/6 or 12.5p) was withdrawn at the end of that year. New 5p and 10p coins had been in circulation for some time as these were identical to the existing 1/- and 2/- pieces (although copper coinage changed on Decimalisation Day, the old 6d remained in use as 2.5p value until 1980). In hindsight, it seems strange how much angst this caused adapting to the far simpler 100p to the £ rather than 240d divided into 20 shillings (20/-) and 12 pence (12d).

Major training efforts were undertaken so that businesses were ready for D-Day, 15 February 1971, and newspaper advertising such as this was commonplace. It can be seen that Eastern National didn't switch until six days later. Note that this was before the NBC corporate image came in, so the logo incorporates Head Office Traffic Department employee Gerald Searles' design (irreverently but affectionately known by some as the 'spiked cabbage') incorporating the Rose of Colchester and the spire of Chelmsford Cathedral.

Being winter, Eastern National had KSW open tops spare (except when used sometimes for Driver Training) and were able to convert four for use as temporary classrooms in connection with decimalisation. 2378-80/2 (WNO474/5/8/83) were equipped downstairs with counters, projectors and screens, heaters and blackout screens for a few weeks but were outwardly unchanged (unlike, for example, Western National's Bristol LS 'Decimal Training Units'). They are recorded as visiting Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Halstead, Kelvedon and Maldon depots. Meanwhile, there were of course hundreds of Setright ticket machines to convert. With thanks to **Richard Dixon** for the advert.



Panther Travel AB62 PAN and other buses outside Frinton Station on 2 March 2021. Details in article on next three pages. **Terry Wiffen**



Rail Replacement Services

(1) Central Line Rail Replacement by Andrew Colebourne

There was no Central Line service between Bethnal Green and Epping or Woodford via Hainault over the weekend of 13 and 14 February 2021. Four of the replacement bus services ran into or within Essex, CL5 (Stratford City - Snaresbrook - South Woodford - Woodford - Buckhurst Hill - Loughton), CL6 (Ilford - Gants Hill - Newbury Park - Barkingside - Barkingside (Fulwell Cross) - Fairlop - Hainault - Grange Hill - Chigwell - Roding Valley - Woodford), CL7 (Loughton - Debden - Epping) and CL8 (Loughton - Theydon Bois).

I was able to observe the operations of two of these, the CL5 and CL6. The former was nothing out of the ordinary as it was operated by Sullivan Buses using their own double-deckers, although I did see one single-decker on the Saturday. However, the CL6 was of more interest. This was operated by Ensignbus. In the past they have used their own single-deckers on this route, but on this occasion, they didn't use any of their own vehicles, instead a variety hired in from Felixstowe Travel, Central Connect, Go Coach, Ipswich Buses, Rotala and Uno.

The Rotala vehicles were especially interesting. From the day after the rail replacement, Monday 15th, Rotala's West London (Stanwell) Hallmark operation became 'Diamond South East', thus sharing a brand with the company's other operations in the West Midlands and the North West. StreetLite 20182 is seen passing under the Central Line Hainault loop bridge N39, about to cross the boundary from Essex into the London Borough of Redbridge on the 13th. (**Andrew Colebourne**). This vehicle started life in the West Midlands (although it was originally intended for 'Hotel Hoppa' services and has additional luggage racks, not used yet on those because of the pandemic), but this and two other StreetLites have been transferred back south to replace vehicles (including a large fleet of 2008-vintage Enviro 200s) that are not compliant with the more stringent London Low Emission Zone requirements from 1 March 2021. See page 24 for another photo of this rail replacement service.



(2) Clacton-on-Sea Area New Signalling System by Adam Kelleher with thanks to A Moore, R Appleton & S Barham

Network Rail are installing a new signalling system in the Clacton-on-Sea area to replace the Victorian equipment with modern technology. The new computer-based signals will replace the system which uses mechanical levers and pullies to change signals and track points to allow trains to switch between tracks. The new system will be controlled from a powered signal box at Colchester. It will complement Greater Anglia's new fleet of trains.

Early preparation work began in winter 2019/20 and work progressed throughout 2020. Intensive work on the project was carried out for 23 days from Saturday 20 February to Sunday 14 March 2021.

Rail replacement buses at weekends during this period were operating from Colchester or Colchester Town to Walton and Clacton. On Mondays to Fridays trains ran between London Liverpool Street and Walton (although the Liverpool Street to Clacton fast train is diverted to Walton, with the Colchester to Walton slow train terminating at Thorpe-le-Soken) with rail replacement buses between Frinton and Clacton.

Thorpe-le-Soken may have seemed a more obvious location for the bus service to Clacton to operate from, but this station is not accessible, trains use a central island platform and passengers have to use the footbridge to reach the platform. On the other hand, Frinton station has a single platform with level access to the forecourt where the buses arrive / depart.

On 25 February, **Alan Moore** saw the following in the Frinton station forecourt: Felixstowe Travel Scania / Higer M90 FX0 (below, top); New Horizon Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Gemini Eclipse BX04 BBJ (partly seen in same photo); Panther Travel Scania K360 / Plaxton Panther AB61 PAN (below, bottom) together with Panther Travel Enviro 200 AB10 PAN tucked in the corner.



Below: Rail replacement services connecting at Thorpe-le-Soken station. Panther Travel Enviro 200 SB09 PAN (ex YX09 FLE) on Colchester Town - Clacton rail replacement service and Klarners Coaches Scania L94UB / Wright Solar YN05 WKE on Colchester Town - Walton-on-the-Naze rail replacement service. The Walton-on-the-Naze service leaves Colchester Town first stopping at all stations, the Clacton service is quicker, like the normal train timetable.

Bottom: Tendring Travel FJ56 PFD, a Scania K340EB4 / Caetano, new to Yorkshire Traction in 2006. At the Walton-on-the-Naze coach park after working Colchester Town - Walton rail replacement service. The first time that Robert has seen 'PSVAR Certified' on the front of a coach. In the background is a Greater Anglia class 321 EMU stabled at Walton-on-the-Naze Station for the weekend.

Both taken Saturday 27 February 2021 by **Robert Appleton**. (Note: Alan's and Robert's photos are just examples of vehicles used on the rail replacement, many others also operated.)



With our blue theme this month and recent mentions of the famous City / Westcliff / Eastern National Wood Green to Southend route, this seems an appropriate picture. Opposite we have FJN 206, a Leyland PD2/12 with Leyland L27/26R bodywork that was ordered by the City Coach Company but delivered new to Westcliff Motor Services after the takeover, allocated number LD25 in the City series. It was numbered 1138 in the July 1954 Eastern National series and then 2118 at the August 1964 renumbering.

Working out its final days from Hadleigh depot and demoted to local routes, it was withdrawn the following year, passing to dealer PVS (London) in October 1965 and straight into the fleet of Super Coaches of Upminster. Returning to PVS in July 1966 it became part of their contract fleet and here displays the colours of Lesney Toys, makers of the Matchbox range which many of us collected in our youth (and still do!). It was used for staff transport, note the yellow Lesney advert, quoting the factory address in Lee Conservancy Road in Hackney; they also had a factory at Rochford where staff transport was largely in the hands of ex London RTs.

But wait, the picture is obviously taken on Madeira Drive in Brighton and a notice in the front window of the somewhat battered bus invites you to "Learn to drive this bus". So, who was the owner at the time? Sadly, we don't know the date of the picture, and the recent PSV Circle fleet history, reviewed last month, only says 'Based at Ongar from 1968; vandalised and for scrap 2/70'. It's a long way from home, although it's conceivable that a full day's driving tuition took the bus to the Sussex seaside.

Photo by **Howard Butler**, courtesy of Colin Hodgkin.

Photo Captions

Inside Rear Cover Bottom: A chance sighting during a bus spotting trip to Romford on 15 July 1978 was HMK 140B, a Plaxton bodied Bedford VAS of Thames Weald, the quirky Kent operator who ran a service via the Dartford Tunnel, bringing shoppers to Romford. At the time, the service only ran on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays with a solitary return trip from Sevenoaks and two or three from Dartford. There's more about the destination blind on page 27. **Richard Delahoy**

Rear Cover Top: Driver training has been able to continue at Arriva Southend during the lockdown, with appropriate risk mitigation measures in place. Here T3535, LF02 PNV, a DAF SB120 / Wrightbus Cadet, new as a dual-door vehicle to Arriva London North as DWL39 in July 2002, returns to Southend depot for a mid-morning break on 12 January 2021, seen in Short Street. **Richard Delahoy**

Rear Cover Bottom: SO15 UBS is a VDL Futura FHD2, new to Austin Coach Travel of Earlston, Scotland as USU 643 in March 2015 in a metallic orange livery. It was acquired by Flagfinders in March 2018 (as reported in EBN 651, after it had received its S0 registration) and ran for a while in Austin livery before being repainted into Flagfinders livery later that year. It has since been re-registered again, to Y2 FLG (as reported in EBN 670). It is seen in the overspill coach park (Campers & Caravans) at Windsor in July 2019. **Paul Smith**

Below: First Essex driver trainer Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse was featured on the rear cover of EBN 682. Here is sister 66846 passing through Ingatestone on 15 February 2021. **David Bateman**







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