Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 734 June 2025



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk

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Motor Omnibus Arrangements by the National Steam Car Co., Ltd.

CHELMSFORD STATION AND WRITTLE (Week Days only).

		morn		morn		noon		even.		even.	Not Sats.		even.	Sats. only.		even.		even.					
Chelmsford Station	dep.	8 30	...	10 10	...	12 0	...	2 8	...	3 20		—	3 35		...	5 10	...	6 22	...	...	...	...	...
Writtle (Orney Green)	—arr.	8 53	—	10 33	—	12 23	—	2 31	—	3 43		—	3 56		—	5 33	—	6 45	—	—	—	—	—
		morn		morn		even.		even.		even.	Not Sats.		even.	Sats. only.		even.		even					
Writtle (Orney Green)	dep.	9 7	...	10 36	...	12 30	...	2 38	...	3 59		—	4 5		...	5 40	...	6 48	...	...	...	...	...
Chelmsford Station	— —arr.	9 30	—	10 59	—	12 53	—	3 1	—	4 18		—	4 28		—	6 3	—	7 11	—	—	—	—	—

CHELMSFORD STATION, GREAT BADDOW AND DANBURY (Week Days only).

		mrn	mrn	even.	Not Sats.	even.	Sats. only.	even.	even.	even.	even.	Sats. only.			mrn	mrn	even.	Not Sats.	even.	Sats.	even.	even.	even.	even.	Sats. only.
Chelmsford Stn.	dep.	8 10	9 40	1 45		5 8		3 16	5 9	6 29	7 15		Danbury	dep.	8 55	1025	2 30		2 53		4 15	.....	7 5	.....	
Great Baddow	— „	8 22	9 52	1 57		5 20		3 28	5 21	6 39	7 27		Great Baddow	— „	9 18	1048	3 53		3 16		4 38	5 32	7 28	7 32	
Danbury	arr	8 59	1029	2 25		5 45		3 56		7 0			Chelmsford Stn.	arr.	9 30	11 0	3 6		3 38		4 50	5 44	7 40	7 44	

CHELMSFORD STATION, BROOMFIELD, AND GREAT WALTHAM (Week Days only).

		morn	morn	noon	even	even.	even.							morn	morn	even.	even.	even.	even.
Chelmsford Station	dep.	8 28	10 0	12 0	3 20	5 10	6 29		Great Waltham	dep.	9 8	10 32	12 40	3 55	...	6 55			
Broomfield Green	— — — — „	8 43	10 15	12 15	3 35	5 25	6 35		Broomfield Green	— — — — „	9 15	10 43	12 52	4 7	5 30	7 7			
Great Waltham	arr.	8 55	10 27	12 27	3 47		6 47		Chelmsford 'Bus Terminus	arr.	9 30	10 50	1 7	4 22	5 47	7 22			

CHELMSFORD STATION, SPRINGFIELD AND BOREHAM (Week Days only).

		mrn	mrn	even.		even.		even.	even.	even.					mrn	mrn	even.		even.		even.	even.	even.	
Chelmsford Station	dep	8 15	10 0	1245	Fris. & Sats only	1 5	Not Fris. or Sats.	3 20	6 20	7 30	Fris. & Sats only		Boreham (Cock)	dep.	8 55	1030	1 20	Fris. & Sats only	...	Not Fris. or Sats.	3 55	6 55	8 5	
Arbour Lane	— „	8 22	10 7	1253		1 13		3 27	6 27	7 37			Plough Inn	— — „	9 13	1048	1 38		1 48		4 13	7 13	8 23	
Stumps Lane	..... „	8 25	1010	1255		1 15		3 30	6 30	7 40			Stumps Lane	..... „	9 15	1050	1 40		1 51		4 15	7 15	8 25	
Plough Inn	— — „	8 27	1012	1257		1 17		3 32	6 32	7 42			Arbour Lane	— — „	9 18	1053	1 43		1 53		4 18	7 18	8 28	
Borcham (Cock)	...arr.	8 45	1025	1 15		...		3 50	6 50	8 0			Chelmsford Station	arr.	9 25	11 0	1 50		2 0		4 25	7 25	8 35	

CHELMSFORD AND MARGARETTING (Week Days only).

		even.		even.											even.		even.		
Chelmsford Bus Termius	dep.	3 10	...	6 20	...	...	...		Red Lion, Margaretting	— — dep.	3 45	...	7 0	...	...	...			
Widford Church	— — — — —arr.	3 25	—	6 35	—	—	—		Widford Church	..... „	4 0	—	7 15	—	—	—			
Red Lion, Margaretting	..... „	3 40	...	6 50	...	...	...		Chelmsford Station	— — — —arr.	4 15	...	7 30	...	...	...			

CHELMSFORD STATION AND GALLEYWOOD (Week Days only).

		mrn	mrn		mrn		even.	even.	even.		even.				mrn	mrn		even.	even.		even.		
Chelmsford dp.		8 20	9 45	Tues. & Fris. & Sats.	9 56	Mons. Weds. & Thurs.	1 30	4 18	4 15	Tues. & Fris. & Sats.	7 25	Weds. & Fris. & Sats.		Stock — — dp.									
Galleywood „		8 50	1015		1026		2 0	4 50	4 50		7 55			Galleywood „	9 0	1035	Mons. Weds. & Thurs.	2 5	4 56	Tues. & Fris. & Sats.	5 45	Mons. Weds. & Thurs.	5 45	Tues. & Fris. & Sats.	8 0
Stock	ar.	...	1040		...		...	5 15	5 15		...			Chelmsford ar.	9 30	1056		2 35	5 15		5 15		5 15		8 22

CHELMSFORD AND LEADEN RODING (Tuesdays and Fridays only).

		morn		even.											noon		even.		
Chelmsford 'Bus Terminus	dep.	11 10	Tues. and Fris. only.	4 30	...	...							King William IV., Leaden Roding	dp.	12 0	Tues. and Fris. only.	5 20	...	...
Water Tower, Rainsford End	— „	11 18		4 38	—	—							Fountain, Good Easter	— — — „	12 12		5 32	—	—
Horse and Groom	..... „	11 23		4 43	...	...							Cross Keys, Roxwell	..... „	12 17		5 37	...	...
Cross Keys, Roxwell	— — — — „	11 38		4 58	—	—							Horse and Groom	— — — — „	12 32		5 52	—	—
Fountain, Good Easter	..... „	11 43		5 3	...	...							Water Tower, Rainsford End	..... „	12 37		5 57	...	...
King William IV., Leaden Roding	ar.	11 55		5 15	—	—							Chelmsford 'Bus Terminus	— —arr.	12 45		6 6	—	—

GENERAL NOTICES.

The Motor Omnibus Services are run subject to the condition of the roads permitting, and the times are liable to alteration, but particulars of any alterations can be obtained from current handbills announcing the services.

Essex Bus Magazine the journal of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group
Issue 734 June 2025



The eastern end of Basildon Bus Station was underwater on 23 April 2025 after heavy overnight rain.
Above: Enviro 400 33416 (WA56 FTO) on route 100 is closest to the camera. This bus has since been withdrawn from service.
Right: StreetLite 63170 (SN64 CJX) on route 200 ploughs through the water. Both **Nick Street**



Front Cover: Recently acquired Volvo B9TL / Wright Eclipse Gemini 37126 (YK57CJJ), in Urban 2 livery with blue front, HD Connect (for Huddersfield) branding, on route X30 to Stansted Airport on the Eastwood Road on 25 April 2025. With thanks to the driver who allowed a gap in the traffic for the photo. **Ian Dann**. A nearside view of this bus in on page 15.

Inside Front Cover: The National Steam Car timetable for July 1914 for the Chelmsford area, courtesy **Nick Street**

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

Subscriptions
The calendar year subscription for 2025 is £29 for printed copies sent by post, or £20 for electronic pdf copies sent by e-mail. New members may join from any month, but subscriptions will always run to December from whichever month the member chooses, please ask for the relevant price.
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EBM Extra
EBM is published monthly. In addition, we aim to publish two Extras each year full of historical features. These are supplied to members free of charge, subject to funding.

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

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

Target Dates for EBM 735

Reports to Sub-Editors	**21 June**
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	**27 June**
Dispatch by Printers on or before	**5 July**

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 28th and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the next month.

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

Group Notices

Membership News

We are very sorry to record the death of Bob Palmer, life member number 105. Bob was Membership Secretary and part of the committee from March 1979 to the end of 1993 and also Treasurer for part of that period. He was the author of the acclaimed 'Eastern National Fleet Record 1964-1990'. A full obituary for Bob will appear in next month's issue.

The EBEG Needs You

Richard Delahoy has decided to step down from some of his EBM and other Group roles. The Group needs additional people to step forward to provide assistance with these. They are not committee posts.

EBM and One Off Publications Proofing

You will get to see EBM before most people so will be even more up to date with news and events. The role requires someone with a reasonable knowledge of bus related items in Essex and who can spot spelling or factual errors before EBM goes to print. You will liaise with the editor, Adam Kelleher, which does mean working to a reasonably tight deadline, usually over the weekend before EBM goes to print.
One-off publications are only produced at the rate of one every year or so or less, so the requirement isn't too time consuming and generally isn't so deadline driven.

Sub Editor Stephensons & NIBS

Your opportunity to contribute to EBM on news and events at one of the country's leading independent operators. You will need to liaise with the operator by e-mail once a month for news, monitor social media, etc. for other news, and receive the occasional reports that come in from Group members. So, it's largely a collating role, with a need to check that information is correct, before sending on to the editor.

Deceased & Other Members Collections

We are in the position that when some members lose interest, downsize property or sadly pass away, the Group are offered their collections. The role involves liaising with the executors / relatives, assessing the scope of the material, passing items of interest to the Group archive, to other enthusiast groups, or arranging for them to be sold. Unfortunately, we are generally not in a position to accept entire collections, so it is down to your discretion.

If you are interested (and we really do need help, the committee can't take on everything) please contact Ian Ransom, address on page 2 under 'Service Revisions, etc.', in the first instance.

For **Sub Editor Arriva**, Adam Kelleher already compiles the Harlow notes each month, so it makes sense for him to take over Colchester and Southend as well. Please send reports to him, details also on page 2.

In closing, I would like to pass on a massive thank you from myself and the committee to Richard Delahoy for all his work, time and support on these activities over a number of years. We are very pleased that he is continuing in his core roles as Treasurer, Membership Secretary, EBM Extra Editor and Archivist.
Ian Ransom, Chair

Facebook Page Manager

We are also looking for a member to take over the management and content creation for our Facebook page, which has over 2,000 followers and where some posts can attract a reach in excess of 25,000. The role involves creating content - as a minimum, the monthly announcement of the magazine publication, notices of meetings, sales events and other Group activities, publication of the monthly First Essex fleet lists and topical, significant local industry news. A regular historical feature would also be great, if time permits. You will also be responsible for monitoring and replying to direct messages (or passing them on for action as necessary) and for monitoring comments on our posts, to ensure that anything that is abusive or inappropriate is removed.

It is important to understand that EBEG has a 'Page', i.e. a shop window for our Group, in the same way as many businesses do. Hence, we originate and control the content, primarily to publicise the Group but also to share important news stories. It is very different to a 'Group' where anyone can post content and there may or may not be

moderation of that content. You will work within our established social media guidelines. Training and guidance will be given.

If you are interested, in the first instance please contact the current manager, Richard Delahoy, for a discussion. Please contact by e-mail to Richard.delahoy@blueyonder.co.uk, not by DM.

Group Meetings

Dates for meetings for the rest of 2025 are as follows.

Main Meetings

These (usually featuring a slide show) resume on Saturday afternoons on a bi-monthly basis from October at **The Quaker Meeting House, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2QL**.

18 October: Robert Appleton, 'Buses of West Anglia'. King's Lynn, Cambridge and Peterborough areas. To include Cambus, Viscount, Stagecoach East and Eastern Counties plus some independents. Start date September 1984 when Cambus was formed out of the western area of Eastern Counties.

13 December: Alan Osborne, 'Essex Buses of Yesteryear'. A miscellany of views of buses in Essex over 60 years from 1965.

Social Meetings

Thursday afternoons **19 June, 24 July, 21 August, 18 September, 16 October, 20 November and 18 December**.
At **'The Globe' Public House, Rainsford Road, CM1 2QL**, 1300 (lunch, optional) for 1400 (start of meeting) to 1700.

The Quaker Meeting House is a five-ten minute walk from Chelmsford Bus & Railway Stations. There is very limited on-site parking, accessed via Cedar Avenue West, we would ask that you leave these for those less able to walk. The meetings are being held jointly with our good friends at The Omnibus Society, Eastern & Southern Branch, who are very generously paying for the room hire so entrance is FREE.

'The Globe' Public House is a couple of minutes past the Quaker Meeting House (coming from the stations) on the other side of the road. There is a car park but you must register your car at the terminal on the bar on arrival otherwise a penalty charge will apply.

Group members are also invited to attend a presentation by Bill Hiron, Omnibus Society President for 2025, at the **Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford** (just round the corner from the stations), on **Saturday 29 November 2025**, 1400 for 1430.

The Running Card

Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Sunday 8 June: Route 418 Heritage Running Day between Epsom and Kingston.
Saturday 21 June: Ipswich Transport & Model Festival. Old Trolleybus Depot, Cobham Road IP3 9JD.
Sunday 22 June: London Bus Museum Summer Festival. Brooklands KT18 0QS.
Sunday 6 July: Classic Bus Running Day from Eastbourne Railway Station.
Sunday 13 July: Showbus. Buckingham Railway Centre Quainton HP22 4BY.
Sunday 20 July: Alton Bus Rally. HSDC Alton College GU34 2LX.
Sunday 20 July: Classic Buses in Hertford.
Saturday 9 August: Across Essex on two Bristol REs. Heritage tour retracing Eastern National services 19 and 53. Pick-ups from Chelmsford Station at 1000 and Colchester Station at 1110. There is no need to book. A detailed itinerary will be available from Andy Gipson (andrewgipson@btinternet.com) and from the Omnibus Society website and the OS E&S Bulletin after 1 June. All EBEG Members and guests welcome.
Sunday 10 August: Big Bus Show. Stonham Barns Park, Stowmarket IP14 6AT.
Sunday 17 August: Lodge Bus and Car Show. High Easter CM1 4QR.
Sunday 31 August: Sudbury Bus Rally. Sudbury Bus Station.
Sunday 7 September: Autumn Running Day. Epping Ongar Railway.
Saturday 13 September: Enfield Transport Bazaar. St Stephens Church Hall, Village Road EN1 2EY.

For a comprehensive list of forthcoming events, with links to relevant websites for more information, see https://www.classicbuses.co.uk/++Events-diary.html. Events are published in good faith. However, the Group cannot be responsible for any changes due to future circumstances. Please check before travelling.

734 for EBM 734

Robert Appleton



Above: Eastern Counties RL**734** (YVF **734**J) Bristol RELL6G / ECW (B53F) new in November 1970. At Rigby Avenue, Mistley, in August 1974, working a crew duty from East Bergholt outstation. RL734 was still in Tilling red livery, but the cream band outlined in black has been repainted white, and NBC fleet names have been applied. On repaints to NBC livery, the beading was red not white. Note the lower front bodywork has been cut away to avoid corner damage when working on narrow country roads. Most Bristol RELLs at Ipswich depot had this modification. **Robert Appleton**

Eastern Counties Road Car Co. started route 9, East Bergholt - Cattawade - Tattingstone - Ipswich, in June 1921. When Eastern Counties Omnibus Company was formed in 1931, Ipswich area routes had 200 added to them, so 9 became 209. The route remained unchanged until the service revisions in the Manningtree area on 30 April 1972, which included joint service with Eastern National 123, Clacton - Ipswich, withdrawn; Mistley - Colchester part of 221 transferred to EN. Eastern Counties operated revised services: 209 Mistley - Manningtree - Cattawade - East Bergholt - East End - Tattingstone - Ipswich; 221 Mistley - Manningtree - Cattawade - Stutton - Holbrook - Ipswich.
Eastern National operated revised services: 103 Harwich - Colchester (renumbered from 70) with a few journeys operating as 104; 123 Clacton - Lawford Place.

The 209 and 221 each operated every two hours, giving a combined hourly frequency between Mistley, Manningtree, and Ipswich. At Manningtree they connected with EN 103 (or 104), operating hourly Harwich - Colchester, and EN 123, Clacton - Lawford Place, operating every two hours. (These frequencies were Mon - Sat daytime off-peak.)

My colour slide was taken on a Saturday morning at 1130. The East Bergholt crew had started their day with a Bristol FS5G / ECW (LFS class) on 0742 East Bergholt - Ipswich 209. At Ipswich they exchanged the LFS for a single-decker to work 0900 Ipswich - Harkstead 221 & 0935 return, 1025 Ipswich - Mistley 209 & 1135 return, 1330 Ipswich - Belstead 208 & 1350 return. Then they regained the LFS for 1425 Ipswich - Mistley 209. The duty finished at East Bergholt outstation at 1507 where another crew took over to work a late duty.

The 221 journeys to & from Harkstead and all 208 journeys to & from Belstead were always single deck due to narrow roads and overhanging trees, so the crew retained the single-decker for the 209 journeys. There was no problem with operating double-deckers on 209 or 221, although the driver had to remember to go over the level crossing at Manningtree station, because the bridge had 10ft height clearance at that time.

Follow Ups

EBM Extra 8 - Hedingham & District - the Early Years
Nigel Turner writes:
In Richard Delahoy's excellent article he queried why Hedingham & District had taken over the Great Bromley - Colchester service of Vines Luxury Coaches when that business collapsed in July 1973 given that its nearest point was some twenty miles from the Hedingham garage.

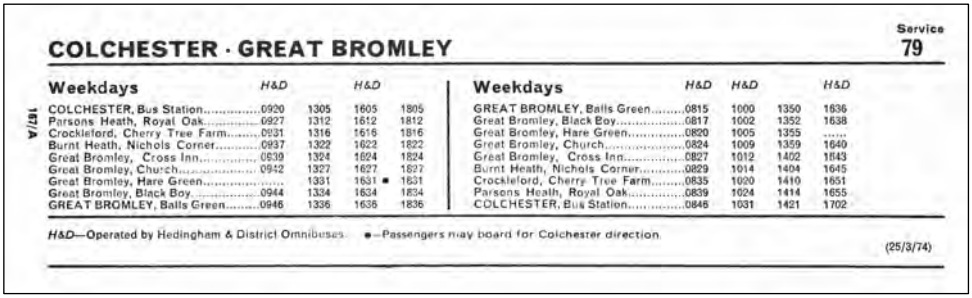
While I'm not privy to the discussions that must have gone on at the time, there was in fact a clear logic to the outcome. As can be seen from the timetable **below**, the service would have essentially occupied one bus all day. Although a double-decker had once been necessary, by 1973 loadings did not greatly tax a single-decker thus it is unlikely that Eastern National would have been enthusiastic about taking it on in its entirety.

The solution that was found was to split the service between ENOC and Hedingham in such a way that neither operator had to commit an extra vehicle to their PVR.

Hedingham ran a works contract to Colchester Lathe (later 600 Group) to a site near the Hythe in the town. Rather than running back dead to the Hedingham / Halstead area it could now go the relatively short distance to Great Bromley in time to provide a peak hour journey into Colchester. Another round trip then brought the morning shoppers into town after which the bus could find its way back to Hedingham.

As a consequence of the takeover of Blackwells in 1965, Hedingham had a journey on the 88 from Halstead which arrived in Colchester at 1424 but which didn't leave on the return journey until 1700. This left a convenient gap to fit in a 1605 journey to Great Bromley which was back in the town by 1702. By some miracle of time travel it was still able to provide the 1700 service 88 departure for a time until that journey was retarded to 1705. What the drivers thought of losing their long break in Colchester is not recorded!

This left the 1305 round trip to Great Bromley and the final departure at 1805 to be operated by Eastern National. As with Hedingham, these journeys would have fitted in with other operations without requiring extra resources and thus a small profit might arise.



Service 79

COLCHESTER · GREAT BROMLEY

Weekdays	H&D		H&D	
COLCHESTER, Bus Station	0920	1305	1605	1805
Parsons Heath, Royal Oak	0927	1312	1612	1812
Crockleford, Cherry Tree Farm	0931	1316	1616	1816
Burnt Heath, Nichols Corner	0937	1322	1622	1822
Great Bromley, Cross Inn	0939	1324	1624	1824
Great Bromley, Church	0942	1327	1627	1827
Great Bromley, Hare Green	.....	1331	1631 ●	1831
Great Bromley, Black Boy	0944	1334	1634	1834
GREAT BROMLEY, Balls Green	0946	1336	1636	1836

Weekdays	H&D	H&D		H&D
GREAT BROMLEY, Balls Green	0815	1000	1350	1636
Great Bromley, Black Boy	0817	1002	1352	1638
Great Bromley, Hare Green	0820	1005	1355	.....
Great Bromley, Church	0824	1009	1359	1640
Great Bromley, Cross Inn	0827	1012	1402	1643
Burnt Heath, Nichols Corner	0829	1014	1404	1645
Crockleford, Cherry Tree Farm	0835	1020	1410	1651
Parsons Heath, Royal Oak	0839	1024	1414	1655
COLCHESTER, Bus Station	0845	1031	1421	1702

H&D—Operated by Hedingham & District Omnibuses ●—Passengers may board for Colchester direction

(25/3/74)

Various EBMs - Bus Stop Shelters Update
In May and June, shelters in Head Street, High Street and Crouch Street in Colchester City Centre are being replaced, although the Real Time Passenger Information screens will be integrated into the shelters at a later date. A photo showing the existing shelters in Head Street is on page 15.

EBM 730 - 'Love Your Bus' Grant Funding
The Love Your Bus Grant is part of the BSIP+ (Bus Service Improvement Plan) funding allocated to Essex County Council by the Department for Transport. To apply for the grant, parish and town councils were asked to submit projects which would increase passenger numbers, improve service frequency and coverage, and attract new users. Many of the successful schemes included collaborative suggestions, which include neighbouring councils working together to maximise the impact of bus services across communities.

The successful councils will each receive a share of the £500,000 fund to start implementing their projects.
The successful councils were:
Sheering Parish Council, Ingatestone and Fryerning Parish Council, North Weald Bassett Parish Council, Woodham Walter Parish Council, Burnham-On-Crouch Town Council, Mayland Parish Council, High Easter Parish Council, Shalford Parish Council and Rayne Parish Council.
Some examples of the projects that were submitted include:
Attracting new passengers through marketing, leaflets, timetables, maps, and / or community-led engagement events.
Service enhancements such as increasing bus service frequency during peak hours, introducing late-night or early-morning services, and / or creating new route extensions to connect underserved areas to key destinations.
Community engagement and promotions through targeted marketing campaigns, community-led engagement events, and / or school and community group partnerships.
Passengers experience improvements by providing information on bus routes and schedules using maps, leaflets, posters, and / or other accessible formats. With thanks to Travel Essex.

EBM 733 - Follow Ups

A minor correction to the caption to the photo on page 8 of Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit standing in front of three Wheal Briton Travel coaches. They were described as ex Brentwood Coaches LUI 7640/1/50, which is correct, but by the time of the photo, LUI 7650 had been reregistered to YMU 134. All three are Volvo B10M-62s, LUI 7640/1 have Plaxton Premiere 350 bodywork, YMU 134 has Jonckheere Mistral.

EBM 733 - Basildon Developments

As illustrated last month, at the start of March one gantry from which electric cables will descend to plug into the new electric buses had been built at Basildon depot, by the end of April another two had been completed. Photo **below** taken on 29 April 2025. **Adam Kelleher**. By 24 May, the fourth and final one had been built. It appears that there are eight charging points on one and 10 on each of the next two, with the fourth one yet to be equipped. Also by this date, the diesel fuel point (near the entrance to the left of this photo) had been moved to just in front of the bus wash on the station side of the depot.
Some buses are parked overnight outside the railway station (opposite the bus station) whilst these works continue.

Electricity supply works have been completed at Westway Depot, Chelmsford and they are nearing completion at Quayside Depot, Colchester. This does not yet involve installing of gantries. There are no immediate orders for electric buses at either of these depots (as reported last month, Essex was not allocated any funding in the latest round of ZEBRA awards) but this work is in readiness for future orders.
With thanks to Richard Delahoy and Derek Stebbing.



Harlow

Acquired Vehicles

4004, YY66 PFV, ADL 20D / Enviro 200, B33F, new to Xelabus, Eastleigh, 432, January 2017.
It remains in Xelabus two-tone green and cream livery but with Arriva fleet names added. High backed moquette seats. Entered service on 16 May 2025.
4135, YX69 NWA, ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMC, B41F, new to Tappins Coaches (Weavaway Travel Group), Didcot September 2019.
After Tappins, was with Dews Coaches of Somersham, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. Seen at Harlow depot in Arriva livery on 2 May 2025 and entered service on 9th. High backed (e)leather seats. Sister YX69 NWB is with Central Connect, fleet number 305.
4136, YX70 OKF, ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMC, B41F, new to Borderbus, Beccles, 111, September 2020.
After Borderbus, was with LandFlight, Solihull. High backed moquette seats. Repainted into Arriva livery, entered service on 14 May 2025.

Harlow's current Peak Vehicle Requirement (PVR) is 39.

Colchester

Enviro 200 4020 (GN58 BUH) transferred from Colchester to Northfleet on 29 April 2025. Similar 4017 has been withdrawn from service following expiry of MOT (according to Bustimes it last ran on 24 April).

Southend

VDL SB300 / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 4450 (MX61 AYJ) has received a super rear advert for Iceland stores. It is seen **below** in heavy traffic at The Woodmans Arms, Thundersley on 12 May 2025. **Nigel Clark**

With thanks to John Card, Richard Delahoy, Keith Sadler, LOTS and Bus Lists on the Web.



Service Revisions

Ian Ransom

15 February 2025

339 (EOR Railway Operating Days) Epping Station - Shenfield Station **London Bus Company**. Revised timetable introduced in connection with running days at Epping Ongar Railway.

31 March

A21 (Daily) Stansted Airport Bus Station - London Liverpool Street Station **Airport Bus Express**. The concession for this service passed from **Airport Bus Express** to **Flibco**, renumbered **FL1**, after operation on this date.

22 April

44 (M-S) Lakeside Bus Station - Grays Bus Station **Ensignbus**. To correct the entry last month, this service has a revised timetable on M-S, not M-F.

1 June

1 (M-S) Harlow Circular via Katherines **Arriva**. Revised timetable on non-schooldays and Saturdays. Reduced from x20 to x30 minutes on these days.

1 (M-S) Greenstead Library - Shrub End, Ambrose Avenue **Arriva**. Further to last month, this service will operate towards Shrub End via Walnut Tree Way, Paxman Avenue and Gosbecks Road, then via Straight Road and Ambrose Avenue. It will then return via the current loop, as it does now, so doesn't serve Paxman Avenue on the way to Colchester.

1/1A (Daily) Clacton Circular via Great Clacton **Hedingham**. Replaces existing services **136/137**, with a revised timetable and common route, **1** operates clockwise, **1A** anticlockwise. Each service runs hourly during daytime, to provide a bus every 30 minutes over common sections.

1B (M-S) Clacton Circular via Lymington Avenue **Hedingham**. This is a renumbering of Service **136A**, with no change to route or timetable.

2 (M-S) Harlow Circular via Staple Tye **Arriva**. Revised timetable on non-schooldays and Saturday. Reduced from x20 to x30 minutes.

3 (M-S) Harlow Circular via Staple Tye **Arriva**. Revised timetable on non-schooldays and Saturday. Reduced from x20 to x30 minutes on these days.

3 (M-S) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Harwich Bus Station **Hedingham**. Minor timetable changes to improve reliability. The 0728 (Sch) ex Clacton revised to operate via the normal route in Harwich and will no longer operate via Hall Road.

4/A (Daily) Clacton Circular via Jaywick **Hedingham**. Revised timetable on all days. M-F peak service increased from x20 to x15 minutes. The Sch only journey via Tendring Education Centre renumbered from **4** to **4A**.

5/A (Daily) Clacton Circular via Bockings Elm **Hedingham**. Revised route and timetable on all days, generally daytime every 30 minutes on M-S and every 60 minutes on Su. The existing service **5** via Bluehouse Avenue is withdrawn. All services will operate via Saxstead Drive, which is the current **5A** route, but will be numbered **5**.

6/A/B (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Point Clear **Hedingham**. Completely revised route and timetable, so that the occasional M-S service **6** via Coppins Green is withdrawn. The occasional service **6A** via Bockings Elm will be enhanced to operate hourly (daytime only) on M-S between 28 July and 30 August. The current service **6B** will be renumbered **6**, but is revised to operate via London Road and will no longer serve Great Clacton.

7 (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Walton-on-the-Naze, The Naze **Hedingham**. Existing service **97** renumbered, with a revised timetable, operating up to every 30 minutes on M-S and every 60 minutes on Su.

8 (M-S) Harlow Circular via Old Harlow **Arriva**. Revised timetable, with the 1850 ex Harlow M-F journey withdrawn.

9 (M-F) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Walton-on-the-Naze, Columbine Centre **Hedingham**. Completely revised route and timetable, generally hourly daytime only, with a Saturday service introduced. Will operate via Clacton Sea Front to replace **134**, then via Great Holland and Kirby Cross, then via Kirby-le-Soken to replace **98**.

10 (M-S) Harlow Circular via Church Langley **Arriva**. Revised timetable on non-schooldays and Saturdays. Reduced from x20 to x30 minutes on these days.

59 (M-S) Harlow Bus Station - Chelmsford Bus Station / Anglia Ruskin University **Arriva**. Revised route and timetable on all days. The small deviation into Chalk End is withdrawn due to low usage. On M-F, additional peak time journeys are introduced.

74 (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Colchester, Head Street **Hedingham**. Revised route and timetable on all days. In Wivenhoe, revised to operate via Co-op, rather than direct via Rectory Road. On Sundays, extended from Stanwell Street to Head Street.
76 (Daily) Jaywick, Tyndale Drive / Clacton, Pier Avenue - Colchester, Head Street **Hedingham**. Revised route and timetable. On all days, revised to operate via University of Essex on all journeys, rather than occasional M-S and all Su services. The current journey on M-S that starts from Jaywick Tyndale Avenue is withdrawn. Additional services introduced to replace **76X** which is withdrawn. 74 & 76 better co-ordinated to provide a service every 30 minutes between them, on the previous timetable there were some 20 minute and 40 minute gaps.
76X (M-S) Jaywick, Tyndale Drive / Clacton, Pier Avenue - Colchester, Head Street **Hedingham**. Service withdrawn and replaced by additional journeys on service **76**.
97B (Daily) Walton-on-the-Naze, The Naze - Clacton, Stephenson Road **Hedingham**. Service withdrawn.
98 (Daily) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Walton-on-the-Naze, The Naze **Hedingham**. Service withdrawn, see revised service **9**.
98A (M-S) Clacton, Pier Avenue - Walton-on-the-Naze, The Naze **Hedingham**. Minor timetable revisions.
99A (Daily) Walton-on-the-Naze, The Naze - Clacton, Stephenson Road **Hedingham**. Service withdrawn.
134 (M-S) Clacton Circular via Holland-on-Sea **Hedingham**. Service withdrawn and replaced by revised service **9**.
136 (Daily) Clacton Circular via Lymington Avenue **Hedingham**. Service withdrawn and replaced by revised services **1/A**.
136A (M-S evening) Clacton Circular via Lymington Avenue **Hedingham**. Service renumbered **1B**.
137 (Daily) Clacton Circular via Stephenson Road **Hedingham**. Service withdrawn and replaced by revised services **1/1A**.
333 (Daily) Braintree Bus Interchange - Stansted Airport Bus Station **Central Connect**. Further to last month, a much improved timetable, with a Sunday service and overnight services, will be introduced, with funding from Stansted Airport Sustainable Transport Levy. So will now operate daily, generally hourly in the daytime, two hourly between 1930 and 0500, with a special service on 25 & 26 December and 1 January. The first Central Connect journey will be 0240 from Braintree and 0345 from Stansted on 1 June.
407/417 (Daily) Harlow, Princess Alexandra Hospital - Old Harlow, Aspen Way **First Essex**. Terminal point in Old Harlow amended to Old Oak Way, which is the stop after Aspen Way, on the terminal loop at Old Harlow, with a revised timetable.
508/A/509/A/510/A (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Stansted Airport Bus Station **Arriva**. Revised timetable to improve punctuality and to provide a better service to Bishop's Stortford High School.
724 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Heathrow Airport Central Bus Station **Arriva**. Minor timetable revisions to improve punctuality.
DaRT 7 (M, Th Only) Demand Responsive Service **Epping Forest Community Transport**. Days of operation revised to M,W,F only. Serves an area North and East of Ongar, as a pre-bookable service, to Epping and Harlow.
HSB1 (M,W,F Only) Toot Hill, Hillcrest Road - Harlow Bus Station **Epping Forest Community Transport**. Service withdrawn, service is now provided by the revised DaRT 7.
X20 (Daily) Colchester Railway Station - Stansted Airport Bus Station **First Essex**. Revised route and timetable. Revised to operate via Takeley, Four Ashes, rather than via A120, between Stansted and Great Dunmow.

2 June
34 (M-S) Bishop's Stortford Interchange Circular via St Michael's Hurst **Central Connect**. NEW SERVICE. This serves a new development on the north side of Bishop's Stortford via Rye Street. Operates x30 on M-F peaks and Saturday and x60 M-F off peak, with funding from Hertfordshire County Council.

Opposite Page: As reported last month, new service 26 (M-S), Shoeburyness East Beach - Hadleigh Memorial / Canvey, Creek Road, operated by First Essex, hourly daytime only, with additional short journeys from East Beach - Shoeburyness Asda, was introduced from 22 April 2025.
Top: Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 37986 (BJ11 ECY), in heritage 1968 FLF coach livery, on 3 May in Rampart Street (around the corner from the Shoeburyness East Beach terminus).
Bottom: Enviro 400 34454 (LJ59 LXT) at the Shoeburyness East Beach terminus on 9 May. Both **Richard Lewis**

These photos provide a link to the following article, **First Essex**. Credits for that article are as follows:
With thanks to Robert Appleton, Stepen Barham, Dale Bell, Jack Benee, Jonathan Cush, Ian Dann, David Edwards, John Lidstone, John Podgorski, Ian Ransom, Roger A Smith, Derek Stebbing, Andrew Toms, Robert West, Bus Lists on the Web, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.




26
Chalkwell Park
Shoeburyness
Ghost Stories
Essex
Essex
LJ59 LXT

New Branding

First's new branding has now spread from vehicles to buildings, at least Basildon and Hadleigh Depots now display it. The Travel Shop in Chelmsford Bus Station has received it, even though this has been closed since March 2020, near the start of the Covid pandemic. Photo **right** taken on 13 May 2025. **Adam Kelleher**

To reflect the way the company is moving towards a corporate image, we have updated the header for this section from this month, dropping the Essex Buses and shuttles branding (with thanks to Richard Delahoy).



Acquired Vehicle

33700 SN12 AHF SFD4DSBRFCGX36777 B450/45 H45/30F 06/12 First Games Transport

E40D / Enviro 400. Acquired from First South Yorkshire & Midlands (First Leicester) on 9 May 2025, to Colchester. It had been in Leicester 'Frequent Fourteens' two tone orange and red livery but was repainted at First Potteries Adderley Green paint shop (from where it was collected) immediately prior to being acquired. It does not have fleet names or other vinyls, except it does have front and rear fleet numbers. It is another of the 100 Enviro 400s new for shuttles for the 2012 London Olympics, First Essex now has 34 of these. Like the others, it went to First Manchester after the Olympics. It was temporarily loaned to Diamond Bus North West in 2019-2020 after their purchase of First's Bolton depot. Upon return to First in May 2020 it moved to Leicester. It entered service with Essex on 13 May 2025.

Vehicles on Loan

Driver Trainer Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus 69148 moved to First Buses of Somerset (Taunton) on 28 April 2025 and similar 66848 to First Solent (Hoeford) the next day. 66848 returned to Chelmsford on 23 May.

StreetDecks 35670 (MF22 SXY) from Worcester (First Worcestershire) and 35674 (MF22 SYE) from Bristol (First West of England) were collected on 24 May for Basildon (35670 had only recently moved to Worcestershire from First West England and hadn't operated there). Basildon Depot is suffering a vehicle shortage with a number Enviro 400s off road and others recently sold (see below for other internal transfers / loans to BN). Both vehicles are in Badgerline yellow and green livery, so similar to the Eastern National livery introduced in 1993 which was based on Badgerline colours; they also bring badgers back to the sides of buses in Essex for the first time since the mid 1990s! These are the first full height StreetDecks First Essex have operated (low height ones have previously been on loan from Ipswich).

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 1 2025/26 (30 March - 26 April) - **Additional to EBM 733**

63061 HH-BN

Period 2 2025/26 (27 April - 24 May)

33411 BN (oos)-Disposal, 33412 BN-BN (oos), 33415 BN (oos)-Disposal, 33416 BN-BN (oos), 33419 BN (oos)-Disposal, 33700 FG-CR, 34462 HH (oos)-HH, 35670 FG-BN (loan, oos), 35674 FG-BN (loan, oos), 37037 CR-CR (oos), 44006 CF (oos)-Disposal, 44081 CF-Disposal, 47630 CR-CF, 47665 CR (oos)-CR, 63063 HH-BN, 66848 CF(DS)-FG (loan, DS)-CF(DS), 69148 CF(DS)-FG (loan)

37037 suffered a seized rear axle whilst on route 87 on 30 April and is withdrawn from service, leaving 32673, in Remembrance livery, as the last Volvo B7TL in service.

Disposals
3 May 2025: 44081 suffered major fire damage on the A414 at Cooksmill Green. It had been working routes in Harlow earlier in the day and was running dead back to Westway Depot, Chelmsford.
9 May: 33419 from Basildon Depot to PVS, Barnsley, for scrap (towed by a Wigley, Barnsley, wrecker).
Week ending 10 May: 33411 and 33415 also collected from Basildon Depot to PVS, Barnsley for scrap.
12 May: 44006 from Westway Depot, Chelmsford, to PVS, Barnsley for scrap.

Repaints
47525 from Urban livery to new corporate livery, no vinyls. First day back in service 23 May.

Further to previous reports, other previously repainted vehicles to have old style fleet names and logos replaced with new style ones are 33987 (by mid-March 2025) and 33676 & 33728 (by early May).

VE Day 80th Anniversary
First Essex was part of the Chelmsford VE Day celebrations which took place in Chelmsford City Centre on Monday 5 May 2025 from 1000 to 1700. This event was organised by 'Chelmsford For You' and featured military vehicles, live 1940s music, historical talks and children's activities.



The First Essex stand featured a Routemaster. On the bus were immersive World War 2 themed sessions with renowned storyteller Mike Dodsworth and the First Bus team were on hand with information about services. The Routemaster was RM54 from Ensignbus (on long term loan from the Newman family) as seen **right**. **Dale Bell**

Timetables & Other Publicity
On 23 April 2025, First Bus posted on X that "We're signing off from X" with immediate effect and referred customers to the First Bus app or website for information. Not surprisingly, this seemingly cost cutting exercise drew an adverse reaction with people saying X was the best way to learn of short notice changes to services. In response to this reaction, First Bus switched off commenting on their post! The VE day event noted above is a case in point where being on X would have been good advertising; on the First Bus website, it took four clicks and scrolling to the bottom of a page, after initially entering the website, to find information about the event (and who would know to look for it in the first place?). Incidentally, Ensignbus are still on X.

As reported in 'Service Revisions' last month, the two short workings on route 104 starting & finishing at Mistley (Rigby Avenue) were extended to start & finish at Wix (Oakley Road) from the 20 April changes. In the timetable on the First Bus website, the Wix terminus is described as 'Wix, White Hart Inn'. However, the pub at the crossroads at Wix is 'The Waggon at Wix', the White Hart Inn was closed in 2001 and later demolished, with houses now occupying the site, named 'White Hart Close'.

Around the Depots
(All vehicles listed below allocated to relevant depot except where stated. All dates May 2025 except where stated.)

Colchester
Now that the shuttles S routes have been replaced, shuttles branding is starting to be removed; 47421, 47427 and 47430 (at least) have lost it.

Further to last month, 32672, 37007 and 37054 were still on the scrap line on 9 May, now joined by 37037. 47665 had returned to service.

Single-deckers on 320: 47655 (1st), 47667 (30 April), 63336 (30 April), 63337 (1st), 63341 (28 April), 69519 (22nd) plus 47658 (21st), 69519 (20th) single-deckers on 372. X20 liveried 34423 on 104 (2nd).

Chelmsford





33714 (SN12 AJV) seen **right** at Westway on 9 May 2025, (**Jack Benee**) and 33730 have received super rear adverts for Balance & Company builders.

Enviro 400 33705 & Enviro 300 67756 on X30 (both 30 April). 33996 (SN65 OGM) a very unusual double-decker on the last couple of rounders on the Sunday 42A to Bishop's Stortford and back during the afternoon and evening of 18 May as seen **above left** at Chelmsford Bus Station. **Jonathan Cush**

Basildon

Further to last month, 33545 and 33559 are now listed for disposal and were both on the scrap line on 29 April. 44598 is still in use as a temporary bike shelter (as illustrated last month), now with a much better sign to that effect on the nearside front window.

34424 has been on loan from Chelmsford since 22nd and has worked on various routes including 300, B1, 25, 825, 100 and 561. This was a rather strange bus for CF to send as it is in Essex Airlink livery and CF have plenty of Enviro 400 MMCs in corporate liveries. Indeed, on 22nd, sisters 34425 and 34426, in new corporate livery, were both on the X30! 34455 has been on loan from Hadleigh since 23rd and has worked on routes 300 and 100.

33563 a double-decker on 251 (4th). 44001 on 9 (14th & 16th).
63063, which had entered service from Baildon on 21st after transfer from Hadleigh (where it last worked from on 16th) on full X10 service on 22nd. BN now has two ex HH long StreetLites in Essex Bus green livery after the transfer of 63061 at the end of Period 1.

Hadleigh

To clarify last month's report, from the 20 April service changes, one bus from Hadleigh now works on route 3 with one bus still from Chelmsford. The Hadleigh one is normally, although not exclusively, one of the two ex-Colchester short StreetLites in red shuttle bus livery with high backed moquette seats, 47696 and 47697. Further to EBMs 727 and 728, on a ride on 47697 on route 3 on 13th, there were still no audible or visual next stop announcements despite it being a legal requirement for all buses registered after October 2019 to have these displays and announcements by 1 October 2024 and despite the fact that it was transferred from Colchester to Hadleigh for this reason.
Mini Enviro 200 44927 was unusual on the route on 10th and 47525 was on it on its first day back in service after repaint (23rd).

First Essex News in Pictures

Recently Acquired Vehicles

Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 69369 (YJ08 XYH) was collected from Leeds (Hunslet depot) on 22 March 2025, as reported and illustrated in EBM 732. Seen on route C1 at Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford on 7 April.
Adam Kelleher



This bus only has 43 seats, all other First Essex 'Mark 2' (i.e. 57 reg or newer) B7RLEs have 44. The 44 seaters have a single forward facing seat at the front over each wheelarch, the missing seat on this bus, which was new for York Park & Ride, is the offside one of this pair where instead there is a small luggage pen.

Enviro 400 33700 (SN12 AHF) was acquired on 9 May 2025, details on page 12. It is seen in Head Street, Colchester on route 52 on 21 May. The only vinyls it has are the old style large fleet numbers on front and rear. The bus stop shelters in the photo are due to be imminently replaced (as reported on page 6).
William Morrison



A nearside view of front cover star Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 37126 (YK57 CJJ) which was acquired from First West Yorkshire on 6 April 2025. On route X30 at Southend Victoria on 25 April.
Matthew Evans



Enviro 300s 67763 (SN62 AUK) and 67775 (SN62 AXO) were acquired from First Eastern Counties in April 2025, full details in last month's EBM. 67775 is seen in Dogs Head Street, Ipswich on 27 October 2017 in Park & Ride livery. Route 800 was every 15 minutes to Martlesham P&R, with one journey an hour extended to Rendlesham, as here.
Robert Appleton



The extension of service 800 to Rendlesham was later replaced by extending Ipswich - Melton service 65 to there. This reduced the PVR for the 800, thus 67763 was repainted into Ipswich Reds livery. It is still in this livery, but with 'Ipswich Reds' fleet names removed, seen on route C1 on Broomfield Road, Chelmsford on 6 May 2025. Note the unusual nearside route number and large destination, with no via points (67775 has the same).
Dan Pretty



67406 (SN13 CKC), which moved to First Essex in October last year, had been a spare vehicle for the P&R but was never in blue livery, it went straight from Urban to Ipswich Reds last August.

67775 was repainted from Park & Ride livery to new corporate livery in January 2025. Here it is at Tower Ramparts Bus Station, Ipswich on 14 March. Note the unusual placement of the (small) nearside fleet name on the front nearside window under the destination / number box. The offside one is in the normal size and position.
Robert Appleton





Above: Last month we commented on the logic of First Essex repainting smart looking two year old vehicles when there are far older vehicles which have never been repainted and are looking very scruffy. To illustrate our point, 12 year old Enviro 200 44541 (YX13 AHU), seen in Chelmsford Bus Station on 29 April 2025. **Adam Kelleher**
Below: Enviro 400 MMC 33984 (SN65 OFZ), in new First Bus corporate livery and fleet names on route 200, passes Enviro 400 33504 (LK08 FLX), in old corporate livery but with local fleet names, on route 100, both bound for Basildon Bus Station, although showing different ultimate destinations, on 23 April 2025 in Grays Bus Station. This was the first week of the 200 being rerouted via Tilbury. **Andrew Colebourne**



Disposal
Further to EBM 731, Enviro 400 123 (32730, YUI 5582) which was only used in service for 10 days, up until 3 December 2024, and had been moved to sales stock, was sold in Period 1 2025/26.

Other Vehicle News
ADL Enviro 400 301 (33908, SN11 FPA), Transbus Enviro 500 former 368 (68 EB), now with the Newman Family, and on loan RMC1510 (510 CLT), all open toppers, were used in the Leeds United victory parade (for winning the Football League Championship and promotion to the Premier League), wrapped in yellow, on Bank Holiday Monday 5 May 2025. Then on 23 May, 68 EB and 301, wrapped in white, were used for the Tottenham Hotspur Europa League victory parade.

Incidentally, 301 is in standard Ensignbus blue and grey livery, not in a special livery for Southend open top route 99.

Tap & Cap
Further to the introduction of Tap & Cap on Ensignbus services from 20 January 2025, as reported in EBM 730, the Ensignbus scheme was extended to First Essex services 100 and 200 from 12 May, but only between Orsett Cock and Lakeside.

With thanks to JD Marquis and Matthew Wharmby.

Group Member Gordon Greig made a visit to Orsett on the first day of service changes on Tuesday 22 April 2025. He boarded First Essex service 201, newly extended to Orsett Hospital, but this was not shown on the destination blinds, just Stanford-le-Hope, the previous terminal point. The extension of route 201 plus one additional journey and revised to operate M-F instead of just M, W, F, is partly to replace route 200 which no longer serves Orsett Hospital. The other partial replacement of the 200 to the hospital has been to extend Ensignbus route 88, which commences in Grays Bus Station, from Stifford Clays to there, as shown **below** on the blind of Enviro 200 MMC 710 (YY18 THZ) at Grays Bus Station. **Gordon Greig**



Acquired Vehicles Update
Further to EBM 727 (November 2024), former Go Ahead London Enviro 200s YX61 BXL / M were noted in Konectbus(es) two tone blue livery without vinyls on 7 May 2025.

Fleet News
Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka 827 (YN57 FYB) sustained accident damage after crashing off the road whilst operating the 1322 ex Clacton 74 service on its way to Colchester on 2 May. The vehicle left the road at Capon Road near the University of Essex. Although the front of the bus was damaged, including the windscreen, thankfully there was only one reported minor injury. The bus has been off road since the accident and it is unknown whether it will be withdrawn or repaired.
Other vehicles off road or limited availability in late April / mid-May were 230, 831 and 870.

Service News
As part of the Konectbuses rebrand, town services in Clacton are being revised to improve reliability and to make the route diagram more efficient. Changes were effective from 1 June 2025. Details in 'Service Revisions' above.

With thanks to Dave Arnold, John Podgorski and the Hedingham website.

Below: As reported in EBM 725, Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President 573 (W491 WGH) was sold to a private buyer in August last year. It attended the Mid Norfolk Railway Bus and Coach Day at Dereham on 11 May 2025. **Paul Sparks**. A photo of 573 in service was in EBM 708 (April 2023).



Part of Transport Made Simple, includes Simonds (where relevant) and FlagFinders

Reporting
A reminder of the areas we cover. Central Connect and FlagFinders combined extend to areas such as the East Midlands, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. We cover all vehicles, but for services only those in Essex and perhaps occasionally Hertfordshire. Simonds, being in Norfolk, is well out of our area so we don't cover services at all, but vehicles are linked to Central Connect, some are in the same numbering series, an example is the New Vehicles below, so we do report briefly on those but generally not on other Simonds vehicles.

New Vehicles
418 (YK25 OME), 419 (YK25 OMF), 420 (YK25 OMG), 421 (YK25 OMH).
Yutong GT12 in green Flixbus livery.
The fleet numbers follow on from ex-Vectare 417 (W17 VEC). Incidentally, 417 is now with Simonds, with their fleet names (replacing Vectare ones).
418 is with Simonds, the others with Central Connect. 418 is seen **below** on the new 007 Norwich - Stratford City service at Stratford City Bus Station on 23 April 2025. This service, two journeys each way per day, had commenced on 17 April. **Owen Woodliffe**
419, 420 and 421 were all seen at London Victoria on 28 April, 419 was on 004 to Nottingham (also noted on this route on 26th) and 421 was on 005 to Loughborough.



Further to last month, the new Mercedes-Benz 517CDI Sprinter base vehicles have OM 654 engines and the 9G-Tronic nine-speed automatic gearbox. EVM, based at Southwater, West Sussex, convert the base vehicles into low floor, wheelchair accessible minibuses, with a maximum seating capacity of 16 and one standee, USB charging points, wood-effect flooring and saloon air-conditioning.

Other Vehicle News
As mentioned above, 417 (W17 VEC) has moved to Simonds. Sister 410 (W10 VEC) has also gone to Simonds, and been refitted with three (nearside) plus two seating to become 72 seaters plus one wheelchair space.

Midi Enviro 200 328 (ex 1602, CE21 GAL) has been repainted from previous Central Connect red and blue (with green leaf pattern at the rear sides) to current Central Connect livery of two tone blue, with 'Central Connect' fleet names.

The end of the school holidays saw 502 & 503 return to school routes 812 & 813 in the Royston area, but 502 has since come back to Harlow. 585, transferred from Central Connect to Flagfinders as reported last month, seems to have replaced 502 on the 812 & 813.

501 remains off road. 506 suffered broken window damage when colliding with tree branches whilst on route 21 on 19 April, but returned to service on 21 May.

Route 20 still has regular workings by single-deckers and the 21 sees plenty of 30 seaters.

416 on Greater Anglia Colchester-Billericay RRP on 11 May.

Although a lot of the allocation at Harlow is stable, there are transfers in and out with some vehicles seen in Harlow for just a day or two.

Having said above that we don't normally report on Simonds vehicles except where they are connected to Central Connect, out of interest is that Simonds have had ADL Enviro 100 EV demonstrator AD24 BUS, in a blue and green metallic livery, on loan, it has been used in service.

With thanks to Robert Appleton, John Card and RouteOne Magazine.

Below: Park and Ride liveried Enviro 200 MMC 313 (YX22 OGZ), with branding for the Chelmer Valley to Chelmsford City Centre route 702, unusually on route 26 on 2 May 2025, exiting the temporary Harlow Bus Station. It has also worked other routes in Harlow, whilst fleet liveried 363 (YY24 HBG) was on 702. One of the routes 313 has worked on was school route 801, Hoddesdon, John Warner School to Roydon, so it is possible the swap with 363 was due to its greater capacity (363 being a mini version). **Andrew Colebourne**
Similar 308 (YX22 OGU) but with branding for Sandon route 701, has also been noted working in Harlow during May.



The last of the three former Lloyds Coaches, Machynlleth, Scania N230UD / ADL Enviro 400s, 611 (SN15 ETD), has now received fleet livery and an interior refurbishment.

Withdrawn Solo 324 (EU07 FVO) and Dart 406 (SN56 AYH) were removed for scrap at the beginning of May 2025.

New websites and apps are now up and running for both Stephensons and NIBS. They still need some content refresh, but are a considerable improvement on their predecessors which have served the companies well for many years. Provided by 'Urban Things', they give much greater scope for off bus ticket sales, as well as the app providing bus tracking.

Stephensons were one of the sponsors of the Essex Bus & Coach Show at the Museum of Power, Langford on 18 May. The following vehicles were displayed, some also being used on the free local services: 328 (Solo), 401 (ADL Enviro 200 MMC - NIBS), 501 (Scania / Optare), 611 (Scania / ADL), 621 (Scania / ADL), 805 (ADL Enviro 400), XHK 234X (Bristol VR / ECW, ex ENOC / Thamesway 3129) and C923 GYD (Ford Transit / Robin Hood, ex SNOC). A photo of most of the line-up is opposite.

With thanks to Matt Crooke, John Podgorski, Chris Staley and the companies.

Scania N230UD / ADL Enviro 400 602 was seen on route 81 at Brentwood Station on 1 May 2025. According to Bustimes, 602 operated on Brentwood services, including school routes, from 1 to 7 May.
Then on 22 May, **Chris Stewart** took the **below** photo of similar 613 (SN15 ETF) on route 21 in Brentwood High Street. According to Bustimes, 613 operated on Brentwood services, including school routes, from 20 to 23 May.
Although occasionally over the years single-deckers from the Stephensons fleet have helped out on NIBS Brentwood services, as reported and illustrated in various EBN/Ms, neither the photographer nor the editor can recall seeing a Stephensons double-decker on NIBS routes before, then two within the same month!





Above: Most of the Stephensons (and one NIBS) line-up at the Essex Bus & Coach Show at the Museum of Power, Langford on 18 May 2025 with Optare Solo 328 (YJ58 PHN) nearest the camera. **Owen Woodliffe**
Below: Further to the news last month of the two former vaccination buses being due to go to Ukraine loaded with additional medical and other aid, one of the pair, Optare Solo 330 (MX59 AWF), is seen departing Harwich on board ship for the journey to Ukraine on 22 May 2025. **Adam Barham**



Other Operators

Roger A Smith

Airport Bus Express, Stansted
The concession to operate the Stansted Airport to London services passed to Flibco from 1 April 2025 (see below). Airport Bus has pursued other work, including new routes, rail replacement and on-line travel agency.

Barker, Roydon
H3 GKN (ex MR05 FEN), a Van Hool T917 (C48F), has gone to Midland Fox, Coalville, Leicestershire.

Fourways, Highwood
Plaxton H74F bodied Dennis Trident LN51 KYS has gone from here.

Flibco, Stansted
As noted above, this operator, a European airport shuttle company, commenced operations of Stansted Airport to London services on 1 April 2025. Ten Scania Touring / Higers supplied by Coach Travel Group and operated by their subsidiary Readybus of Slough are used on route FL1, serving Stratford and London Liverpool Street, which operates 24/7 with 96 daily journeys. The Operating Centre is at one of the airport car parks. Although Readybus is the official operator, some other CTG companies are involved - Horseman, JH Coaches and Johnsons. Vehicles of the first two have been seen, along with drivers from the third. More information at https://www.busandcoachbuyer.com/first-glimpse-flibco-launches-in-the-uk.

Below: Brand new Readybus YN25 XLE, suitably adorned for its role, calls at Stratford City Bus Station en route from Liverpool Street on 17 April. **Owen Woodliffe**



REL Davian, Rayleigh
V5 SMT (ex YN56 DYO), a Plaxton bodied Mercedes-Benz O814D (C33F), has gone to PSV Recycling, Hadleigh.

REL Tendring, Thorpe Le Soken
YN56 BFX, an Iveco 100E21 with Indcar C29F body, YX56 AFN, a Mercedes-Benz O815D with Ferqui C27F body and YJ08 DKX, a Temsa Safari (C51FT), have all gone to PSV Recycling, Hadleigh.

Peter Godward, Basildon
Reported as brand new here in March 2025 is TT25 PGC, a Yutong T12 2HDH (C53FLt).

Lodge Coaches, High Easter
Further to EBM 732, JW25 DGE, a new Mercedes-Benz Tourismo, has seating capacity C59Ft. F20 DGE, a Mercedes Benz O815D with Sitcar C27F body, reverted to its original registration of WA06 GRU and is now no longer here. AL15 DGE, a Mercedes Benz Tourismo C49FT, has gone to Jubilee Coaches, Rollesby, Norfolk.



Right: Sitcar Beluga bodied Mercedes-Benz O816D WA13 ALO (C25F) in Avenue Road, Witham in March 2025. This vehicle was new to Anderson, Bermondsey in March 2013. **Roger A Smith**

South East Coaches, Wickford
YN67 VDX, an Irizar i6 (C57FT), arrived here in February from Ashford Minibuses, Ashford, Kent and has been reregistered as F25 SEC.

Truck & Bus, Rettendon
W391 PRC, a Mercedes Benz 0404 with Hispano Vita C49FT body, YN55 PXD, an Irizar C49FT bodied Scania K114EB, and similar YN55 PXW have all gone from here.

Kings Coaches, Stanway
KC25 ABC, a Mercedes-Benz Tourismo M/2 13.1m (C53Ft), was received brand new on 4 March 2025 from Evobus (UK) Ltd, Coventry. In exchange, VDL Futura KC16 ABC went to Evobus, but on the same day, left for Roberts Travel Group, Hugglescote, Coalville, where it stayed until 17 March. It returned to Evobus for 10 days before heading north to Coast to Coast Travel, Ardrossan (still in Kings livery but with fleet names removed).

Below: KC25 ABC while on tour at Norden station on the Swanage Railway line on 12 May. **Dee Hellery**

With thanks to the PSV Circle and Peter Mobbs.





Above: Taylors of Benfleet Setra S315 T22 CHK (C48Ft) in Chichester Road, Southend on 14 March 2025. This coach was new to Staines (Crusader Holidays), Clacton as EK51 KZD in January 2002 and was previously with Kirbys Coaches, Rayleigh. It is still in Crusader livery. **Richard Lewis**

Below: Mini Enviro 200 LJ09 KRD on loan to Nu-Venture at King Street, Maidstone, on 25 February 2025. It first ran for them on the 10th. It was covering for an Enviro 200 away for accident repairs and received the temporary fleet number 827. Opposite it is one of Nu Venture's own Enviro 200s and behind is one of their own Enviro 400s, one of three acquired from Green Transport, Newtown, West Midlands, in 2023 and all of which retain their previous owner's dark green livery. **Richard Lewis**

LJ09 KRD was new to Arriva London (ENL37) as a dual door vehicle. It was acquired by Panther Travel in Essex (via Ensignbus) in February 2021 (see EBM 683). Panther converted it to single door, repainted it into fleet livery and reregistered it to VB09 PAN. It was sold in summer 2022 to J & B Travel, Leeds after reverting to its original registration (see EBM 701). It later moved on to Hulleys, Baslow, who were briefly associated with Go Coach, with it moving to Go Coach from whom it was on hire from. It remains in Panther livery minus fleet names. It was illustrated when with Panther in EBM 696. It last ran in service for Nu-Venture on 27 March and returned to its owner that day.





Above: Epping Forest Community Transport Mercedes-Benz 513 CDI / Treka EA16 OLT (B15L), awaiting departure from the temporary Harlow Bus Station to Hoddesdon on route 392 on 14 March 2025. In the 1960s London Transport operated route 393 from Harlow to Hertford via Nazeing & Hoddesdon using RFs. **Paul Sparks**
Below: A former Stagecoach London Mercedes-Benz Citaro articulated bus, LX04 LCC, had been parked in the lay-by on the A130 (southbound) between the Fairglen and Sadlers Farm interchanges. First noted on 12 April 2025 and was still there on 10 May but had gone by 17th. It is in the two-tone blue and white livery of Beaver Bus of Whetstone, Leicestershire, with fleet names removed, but more recently it had seen some use on rail replacement duties in South London with Replacement Bus Hire of Lewisham. Photo taken 15 April, **Nigel Clark**. Thanks also to Richard Lewis.



27 April 1975 Group Tour

Alan Osborne

Part 1 - Harris's Coaches, Southend Transport and photos taken at Castlepoint Bus Company yard, Hadleigh

Additional material Adam Kelleher. All photos **Alan Osborne**

Members will recall the recent sad passing of Martin Weyell, our former Coach Tours Organiser. This feature is a tribute to him. Martin took over this role from me in 1973. Fifty years ago, on 27 April 1975, he ran the fourth tour that he had personally organised, to South Essex. The tour booking form and itinerary is shown **below**. Incidentally, the £1.20 fare for members equates to £18.30 today. One of the passengers was Adam Kelleher, our current magazine editor, attending his first ever Group tour.

EASTERN NATIONAL ENTHUSIASTS GROUP

General Circular E.C.4. Coach Tour T/34 March 1975

SOUTH ESSEX TOUR - Sunday, 27th. April, 1975

A tour has been arranged for the above date by kind courtesy of the operators concerned. The vehicle to be used for the tour will be an Eastern National Bristol Lodekka (LD5G), examples of which are currently being withdrawn from service.

The vehicle will visit EASTERN NATIONAL garages at BASILDON, SOUTHEND, HADLEIGH and CANVEY. Visits will also be made to HARRIS Coaches of GRAYS, to SOUTHEND TRANSPORT, to NATIONAL TRAVEL (SOUTH EAST) at PRITTLEWELL and also to the premises of SMITH & MAY (CASTLEPOINT BUS CO.) at BENFLEET.

The vehicle will pick up at TRAFALGAR SQUARE (Northumberland Avenue, 0900); ILFORD (Clements Road, top, 0930); ROMFORD (Ring Road, E.N. Bus Stop ser. 251, 0945); UPMINSTER (Corbets Tey Road, 1000).

A lunch stop of about one hour will be made in SOUTHEND,,and a photographic and refreshment halt will be made at BASILDON(Bus Station) on the return journey.

The vehicle will return to LONDON by 2030 by way of UPMINSTER (1930); ROMFORD (1945) and ILFORD (2000).

Additional picking-up and setting-down points along the line of route can be made by prior arrangement.

To: M. L. Weyell Esq., Tours Organiser, Eastern National Enthusiasts Group, 52, Ascot Close, Hainault, ILFORD, Essex. IG6 3AF. Telephone: 01-500 5816

Please reserve _____ seat (s) for me on the South Essex Coach Tour for which I enclose a Postal Order/Cheque/Cash value £_____.

FARES Group Members ..... £1.20 Guests £1.30

NOTES Pleade make all Postal Orders/Cheques payable to 'M. L. Weyell' and ENCLOSE A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE for confirmation of booking.

NAME _____ E.N. GROUP MEMBERSHIP NUMBER _____

ADDRESS _____

PICK UP POINT _____ SIGNATURE _____

Harris's Coaches, Grays, Parker Road yard.
818 VNO is an AEC Reliance with Harrington Cavalier C41F bodywork dating from April 1961. Note it has 'Harris Coaches' in the front destination box but 'Harris's Coaches' as a fleet name on the side.



Laying over in Parker Road whilst other vehicles were being shunted for photographs is LVX 320C, a Bedford VAL14 with Harrington Legionnaire C49F bodywork, new in 1965. This also has a "Harris's Coaches" side fleet name and the same on the rather low down destination blind.



At Southend Transport's London Road garage is 312 (PHJ 951), a 1958 Leyland PD3/6 originally with Massey L35/33R bodywork. Converted to open top (O41/33R) in the winter of 1970.

This bus has been owned by the Jesada Technik Museum, Nakon Chaisri, Nakhon Pathom province, Thailand since at least 2008. There was a report on it, with a photo taken on Christmas Day 2022, in EBM 712 (August 2023). It carries a fake registration, NML 622E, which really belongs to ex-London Transport RML2622, which is also at the museum.





Above: 217 (MJN 217F), a Leyland Leopard with East Lancs B51D bodywork new in March 1968, on route 12 at Southend Central Bus Station which had opened the previous year. **Below:** At the garage is 318 (LCK 739), a Burlingham FH41/31F bodied Leyland Titan PD3/4, new to Ribble Motor Services, 1576, in 1958 and on loan from Ensignbus. Southend had three of these to tide over whilst awaiting new Daimler Fleetlines. The first entered service in April 1974, all three returned to Ensignbus in November 1975. All three were exported to Hong Kong where they became driver training buses in the CMB (China Motor Bus) fleet where I photographed them in 1986. The full story of these buses was in EBM Extra 3 (Spring 2023), including one of my Hong Kong photos.





Above: 356 (WJN 356J), a Daimler Fleetline CRL6 / Northern Counties (H49/31D) dating from 1971, in overall advertising livery for Victoria Circus Shopping Precinct, in Central Bus Station on route 29 to Eastwood.

Below: Back at London Road garage is 347 (MHJ 347F), a 1967 Leyland PD3/4 with East Lancs H41/32R bodywork, blinded for route 7 to Ashingdon Schools. On the rear cover is a photo of the superbly restored Eastern National Bristol FLF / ECW 1622 / 2748 (EOO 590) which now resides at the Keighley Bus Museum. For around a decade in the early part of this century, 347 and 1622 were together languishing outside and deteriorating at Western Greyhound, Cornwall.



Three photos taken at the Castlepoint Bus Company yard at Hadleigh. Firstly, former London Transport RT2823 (LYR 993) in the Matchbox Toys (Lesney) blue staff bus livery for workers journeys to their factory.



VTX 447, a 1958 AEC Regent V with Weymann H37/33F bodywork, which was new to Rhondda Transport Co. of Porth, Glamorgan, South Wales, 443. To the left of the photo is …



… HLJ 44, a Bristol K6A / ECW L27/28R, new in 1940 to Hants & Dorset, TD895. After the Second World War, when London was short of buses, many new Bristol Ks were diverted to the capital. HLJ 44 was used at Amersham in 1949/50. Here it is seen parked out of use, it had also been a staff bus for Matchbox Toys (Lesney) in their blue livery, but here with fleet names partly painted over. Behind is an ex-Midland Red D9 still in NBC red.

Little did we know at the time, but three decades later HLJ 44 would be fully restored to as new condition by Roy Hawkes and later was used on special services by Ensignbus.

To be continued.



Recent Rally Appearances



Right: New to Eastern Counties in February 1999 Scania L94UB / Wright Axcess Floline 574 (S574 TPW) at the Delaine Running Day at Bourne 26 April 2025.
Paul Harvey

The Essex connection is that this bus moved from First Eastern Counties (renumbered 65574 in the Sema scheme) to First Northampton and was then with First Essex from September 2013 to February 2016. It was then sold to Connexions Buses (Harrogate Coach Travel), being one of the few First Group buses to avoid scrap. It entered preservation in November 2017. It is in pseudo mid to late 1990s First Eastern Counties Great Yarmouth Blue Bus livery of cream and two shades of blue; being a low-floor vehicle, it never wore this livery in service, it spent its entire life with First Eastern Counties, First Northampton and First Essex in Barbie.

Rear Cover

Top: The superbly restored former Eastern National Bristol FLF / ECW 1622 (later 2748, EOO 590) was a star attraction at the Leyland National 53 rally in Whitehaven, organised by the Workington Transport Heritage Trust over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend, 3-4 May 2025. Owner Ian Rudd brought the bus up from its home in the Keighley Bus Museum. On both days it performed a taxing, hilly town circular and then a run out to the Cumbrian seaside village of St Bees, where it is seen on 3 May turning in the beach car park there, with a near capacity load. Its only other expected public appearance this year (other than for visitors to the Keighley Museum) is due to be at the Bala Lake Railway Gala in August.
The restoration of EOO 590 was covered in EBM 728 (December 2024) but overlooked was that there was a photo of this bus at Brentwood depot taken in the 1960s on page 29 of EBN 686 (June 2021).

Bottom: But some might claim that the real star of this show was Stephen Morris's ex Cumberland 1936 Leyland TD4 with 1950 ECW lowbridge body; readers can make their own minds up!
Cumberland had a number of Leyland TD4 Titans rebodied by ECW in 1950, including BRM 596, which had been new in 1936 with a Massey body, originally numbered 132; it became fleet number 291 and was withdrawn in 1959, passing to Barton as their 826 before entering preservation in 1965. After various owners, it passed to Stephen Morris's Quantock Motor Services and has been restored as seen here in Hensingham, Whitehaven on 4 May 2025. This is just how a dozen Eastern National TD4 and TD5 buses, new in 1937, looked after they were similarly rebodied with ECW lowbridge bodies in 1949/50 (livery, fleet name and destination layout aside - Eastern National had the ultimate destination box above the number / via box, similar to their Bristol Ks). EN fleet numbers were 3657-9/61, 3706-13 (ENO 935-7/9, FEV 175-82). Ten of the dozen rebodies were then transferred to United Counties in May 1952 when the EN Midland Area was split off, the other two being renumbered in 1954 as 1107/8 (ex 3658/9). They lasted in the EN fleet until the early 1960s (1107 was withdrawn in November 1962 and 1108 in early 1964).

Both **Richard Delahoy**





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