

ESSEX BUS NEWS

The Monthly Magazine Of The

ESSEX BUS ENTHUSIASTS GROUP

JUNE 1990

(Formerly the EASTERN NATIONAL ENTHUSIASTS GROUP)

ISSUE No.314



An operator who appeared in unexpected fashion in the local area was East Midland (Frontrunner). An EBEG tour visited Rainham on 21.5.89, only a few weeks before Frontrunner left. On this day 405 (JDB 117N) was in the company of a number of other ex GM Atlanteans acquired to operate LRT services 248 & 252.

(I Ransom)

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GROUP NOTICES

EASTERN NATIONAL (SOUTH) FAREWELL TOUR SAT. 14th JULY

As recorded elsewhere in this months magazine, the Eastern National name is set to disappear in the South of the county. With this in mind it is planned to visit Southend, Hadleigh, Basildon and Brentwood on the above date with visits to EN depots and centres of interest. The vehicle for the tour will be former EN Bristol FLF 1640 (RWC 607). As you may appreciate this tour has been arranged at very short notice and the actual timings have yet to be confirmed. It is thought that departure from Southend will be about 1000 returning at about 1800. If you wish to come along please write to Ian Ransom enclosing an SAE for full details. The tour will be free of charge although members may wish to make a contribution to ENPG/EBEG funds.

MIDLAND AREA TOUR SATURDAY 28th JULY 1990

A booking form for this tour is included with the magazine. A number of interesting independent operators are included in the itinerary and so the tour is bound to be popular, book early to avoid dissatisfaction.

EVENTS DIARY

In this new section we plan to give details of future local transport events that may be of interest:-

- 1.7.90. Cambridge. Open day and rally at Cambus depot.
- 8.7.90. Leighton Buzzard Rally at Leighton Buzzard BR station. St. Albans Bus and vintage vehicle rally.
- 14.7.90. Lowestoft. East Anglia Transport Museum London Event. Free vintage bus service from Lowestoft station. Also on 15.7.90.
- 15.7.90. Southampton. Eighth Royal Victoria Bus Rally.
- 21.7.90. Holloway. Rally and open day at London Buses depot.
- 19.8.90. Harrow Weald. Open day at London Buses depot.
- 26.8.90. Waltham Abbey. Lea Valley Motor Festival. Also 27.8.90.

* SIMPSONS OF LEADEN RODING *

To commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the take over of Simpsons of Leaden Roding by Eastern National on 24th March 1940; and the restoration of the former Simpson link between Ongar and Dunmow on 20th May 1990 by Essex Heritage service 612, the Group has published a special booklet. "Simpsons of Leaden Roding, A Pioneer Essex Country Busman" by Peter Snell is a 16 page A5 booklet. It is well illustrated with views of Simpsons vehicles (mostly loaned by Rob Simpson the grandson of the founder and previously unpublished), and also contains extracts from timetables, a map and a fleet list as well as a history of the operation. Copies are available from Peter Snell (whose address appears on the cover) priced at 1.95 plus 20p post and packing.

MEMBERS ADVERT

Andy Rains has the following items for sale :-

Approx 50 copies of Bus and Coach 1958 to 1965

Most issues of Buses/Buses Illustrated from 1960 to date

He would like to sell them in one or two lots with the buyer to collect and is looking for an offer in the region of fifty pounds. If interested please contact Andy Rains, 6 Princes Court, Princes Avenue, Southend on Sea SS2 6RN.

CAN YOU HELP ?

In an effort to improve our coverage of independent operators in the county, more information is required from the Braintree and Bishops Stortford areas. No matter how trivial you think it is, please send your observations to Dave Arnold. Please note, this means you, dont always leave it to someone else! Thank You.

COOKS COACHES

We have been asked by Cooks Coaches to trace photographs of their coaches, we have been able to supply some but there are many gaps still remaining. If you have any shots of Cooks vehicles please contact Peter Snell.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN ESSEX

Another new feature which takes a look at other modes of public transport in the county.

If you would like to write an article or see something that may be of interest, please write to the editor.

To get things underway the news sheet editor noted 90040 at Stratford in Railfreight livery for crew training on 26.5.90.

EASTERN NATIONAL

Badgerline update

The main item of news this month is that from 30th July 1990, Eastern Nationals operations are to be split. A new company is to be set up operating from Southend, Hadleigh, Basildon, Brentwood, Walthamstow and Ponders End depots. The new name and livery had not been announced as we went to press. Eastern National will continue to operate services at the remaining depots. Both companys remain in the Badgerline group. The one most noticable item is that with the current fleet allocations the new company has no coaches (except dp vehicles).

Vehicle Reallocations

6/90 1751 POOL- D/L (D)

Further to 312/3 Leyland Lynx 1426 was back in service from Chelmsford on 29.5.90.

During late May 1740 (Pool) and CF 1747 were in use at Bishops Stortford. Indeed 1747 is almost a permanent fixture. Other Pool vehicles in use during the early half of May were 1721 and 1751 both at Braintree.

Repaints

W.E. 5.5.90	0231 (revised Eddy Grimstead advert) at BN?
	1923 at TS, 3117 at BN
W.E. 12.5.90.	1787 at TS (overall advert for Autotrader)
	3098 at SD
W.E. 19.5.90.	1791 at BD
W.E. 26.5.90.	1873 at TS (revised Meridian Windows advert)
	4004 at CN (allover advert for Autotrader)
	3059 at CR
W.E. 2.6.90.	1501 at TS

TS = Tom Sangster

1917 has had its overall advert amended to Osborne Honda.
1923 was the former Lancaster Garages overall advert.

Service Vehicles

9003 has been withdrawn and is to be stripped for spares.
The ex MOD Bedford is thought to be a SBS with Marshall bodywork.
Conformation to follow.

Unusual Workings

1.5.90.	CR 4004 on service 6/6A (normally LN operated).
14.5.90	CR 3114 on service 53K (thought to be a Chelmsford OAP special left Colchester at 1615).
17.5.90	CR 3204 on service 177 (CountryCar "minibus" replacement).
17.5.90	DT 1885 on service 6/6A (CR operated service).
21.5.90	CF 4005 on service 53 (CR operated service).
23.5.90	BS 1127 on service 333 (normally LN operated).
28.5.90	HH 3097 on service 3 (Southend Airshow).
31.5.90	BS 1111 on service 309 (normally LN operated).
1.6.90.	CF 3057 on service 53 (CR operated Mon- Sat.)
1.6.90.	BS 1127 on service 712 (normally 4510)
5.6.90.	SW 1921 on service 152 (0720 ex Chelmsford) CF duty.

DT 1885 was also noted on service 53 on 17/18/19/21/22.5.90.

General

Springfield Road, Chelmsford reopened in late June and all services reverted to normal routes.

Running numbers appear to have been introduced at Ponders End on services 307 & 359. They are carried on the side and rear route number plates and are just above the route number. Both use a series starting at one. When were they introduced? Eastern National have introduced a Bus Hopper pass in the Southend, Rochford and Castle Point area. Valid on all EN commercial services it is priced at #8.25 a week or #30 for a month. This is in competition with the ST Travelcard.

Highwayman

The following were observed at Basildon Bus Station on 26.5.90. the first day of this years summer express services:-

SERVICE	ROUTE	VEHICLE
804	Southend- Norwich	CF 1130
806	Canvey- Hemsby	BN 1124
824	Maldon- Hastings	MN 1115
825	Clacton- Southsea	CN 1117
827	Braintree- Weymouth	BE 1309

Also noted of interest were ST 581 on service 795 to Brighton, Harris UHK 203W for Gt. Yarmouth, Shearings 604 and Wallace Arnold G537 LWV both on holiday feeders. Loadings were poor except on 795 804 and the Harris vehicle.

Subsequent Disposals

1057 (TJN 980W)	Davies, Ebbw Vale, 3/90, ex Powis, Norton Canes.
1206 (BNO 692T)	Rogers, Rainworth, thence to Rainworth Travel Ltd., 2/89. Share capital of Rainworth Travel acquired by East Midland, 4/89, thence to Stagecoach Holdings Ltd., 7/4/89. Operations transferred from Langwith to Shirebrook depot of East Midland, 3/90, and amalgamated with the remaining activities of East Midland now marketed as Midland Travel.
1237 (859 ETW)	Owner is Salmon, Benfleet (member of ENPG)
1301 (XHK 213X)	Entered service as C47F with Colbourne & Pulham, Newton Abbott.
1305 (LLT 346V)	Jones, Sunbury, 4/88, ex Hills, Hounslow (corrects Mag. 307).
1406 (XVW 631L)	Being resealed to C39FT by Miller, Horsham.
(CSV 253)	
(VBY 546L)	
(ARU 99A)	
1408 (XOO 877L)	Sold to West Sussex County Council, AR68, 11/89.
1411 (XOO 880L)	It is now confirmed that this vehicle passed from Bennett, Uxbridge to Clevestone Hartlepool by 9/87 (clarifies Mags. 288 & 301).
(CSV 231)	
(WEU 73L)	
1412 (XOO 881L)	Withdrawn by Relph, Newgate Street, 10/88,
(CSV 303)	thence to Yeates (dlr.), Whaddon, 9/89.
(WEU 72L)	
1419 (GJD 195N)	Miller, Horsham, 5/89, ex Corbel, Edgware.

1527 (LPU 452J) United Provincial (t/a "Pennine Blue"), 12/89, ex Lincolnshire Road Car Co. Ltd., 1214.

1705 (WNO 554L) Hatton, St. Helens, by 1/90 ex Williams, Deiniolen.

1713 (WNO 562L) Was withdrawn by East Midland, 534, 10/89 and passed to Yorkshire Terrier, 10/89. Then as per 1718.

1718 (NEV 675M) Ownership of Yorkshire Terrier changed from Baldwin, Sheffield to Baldwin, Keeling and Dixon Sheffield, 3/90. (Will still be referred to as Yorkshire Terrier in magazine).

1719 (NEV 676M) Numbered 7 by Yorkshire Terrier, also as per 1718.

1720 (NEV 677M) Also as per 1718.

1724 (NEV 681M) Loughborough Coach and Bus Co., Loughborough, 3381, by 1/90, ex Midland Fox. Painted in new style livery of dark green with wider cream waistband and black pinstripes.

1730 (NEV 687M) Withdrawn by Coleman, Yeovil, by 3/90.

1731 (NEV 688M) Withdrawn by Driffield and District, Langtoft, 2/90.

1736 (HWC 87N) Went to Wreake Valley, 18, 1/90, thence to Midland Fox, 2/90. Numbered 3387 by Midland Fox, however, this is only a computer reference number, actually carries Wreake Valley number 18, but painted in Astill & Jordan livery.

1746 (JNO 195N) Withdrawn by East Midland, 537, 10/89, passed to Yorkshire Terrier, 10/89, then as per 1718.

2385 (WNO 481) Now repoted as withdrawn by White, St. Albans, by 7/88. (Additional information to Mag. 309).

2821 (JHK 453C) Owner is Bistrobuss, Dublin. (Additional to Mag. 288).

2839 (LWC 665C) Top Deck Travel, Horsell Common, Woking, 10/89 ex Top Deck Travel (N-PSV). Is now H12/16FD.

2853 (OVX 297D) As per 2839.

2861 (RHK 346D) Now repoted as passing to McGurk, Worthing (as mobile caravan), by 9/89, ex Cahalane, Wembley (as mobile caravan). (Additional to Mag. 312).

2892 (WNO 982F) As per 2839, except date of transfer 11/89, and is now H10/16FD.

2900 (WVX 527F) As per 2892, except date of transfer 2/89.

2913 (WWC 743F) As per 2892, except date of transfer 2/90.

4081 (ONO 995) Owner is Salmon, Benfleet (member of ENPG), by 2/90, and it is presumed from 1982.

9017 (LFS 289F) Reported as withdrawn by Top Deck Travel, 11/88; previously given (Mag 295) as passing to North (dealer), Sherburn, 7/88, ex Top Deck Travel, Edgware. Clarification appreciated.

Southend Transport

These notes are correct to June 4.

Vehicles

ACQUIRED: the first of the ex Kentish Bus Tigers to enter service were 561/2 (A103/6 EPA) on June 1; the others were due to follow shortly.

MODIFIED: 904 (JTD 390P) re-entered service in its open top guise on Sunday May 27 (on a normal duty on routes 7/8 !!). In the following days it was seen on routes as diverse as 1, 3A, 4A, 7A, 17 and 18! Livery is blue lower panels with white window surrounds and above, set off by a broad red band over the windows and a narrower blue band near the top. It is not named. 905 (JTD 395P) subsequently emerged on June 4, and both buses were due to go to Epsom on Derby Day, June 6.

DEMONSTRATOR: the Talbot was F938 TVC and was not, after all, used in service; it was however used as a crew runabout.

WITHDRAWN/INITIAL DISPOSALS:

502	YHB 20T	Wdrn 5/90; sold to Hyndburn Transport (for their hire fleet); delivered 29/5.
505	BTE 205V	Wdrn 31/5; not yet sold
508	BTE 208V	Wdrn 5/90; sold to Keenans Coach Travel, Ayr (delivered 24/5)
524	EBM438T	Now sold to Deka Ltd, Acton
603	JEV244Y	The new owner is Apix Travel, London & Herne Bay

This leaves only 511 (XGS 770X) and 521 (XWX 193S) extant of the once numerous Leopard fleet.

Of the 9 LN's acquired from London & Country last December, 4 (713-6) remain in service in their hybrid liveries. Two have been cannibalised for spares (XPG 240N and LPB 181P), two have been sold for further service elsewhere (GPD 298N to Aldham Coaches, Barnsley and LPB 217P to Bonners Coaches, Ongar) whilst the remaining one, NPK 241R, is expected to be retained and to enter the operational fleet.

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSALS:

335	CJN 435C	the preserved PD3, is for sale; in the meanwhile it has been in use in the Gravesend area as a trainer.
384	GHJ 384L	Bennett & Claridge, Chieveley, Berks 2/90 ex Tarka Travel, Bideford

General

The Network SouthEast Airshow on Bank Holiday Monday, May 28, saw ST operating numerous duplicates with some highly unusual route workings on what would normally be Sunday schedules: the 7 was augmented by RM worked shuttles running Ashingdon Schools - CBS and Deeping to Shoebury East Beach!, the 29 was largely RM worked during the day, and open top 904 was busy on the 4A (CBS - Shoebury East Beach), while the ECC contract journey on 11 to Chelmsford saw a Fleetline.

Even EN put out a few extras - 11's and 20's from Rayleigh High Street to CBS, and extra 3's. As noted last month, Lynxline/Stephensons were also busy on their routes 60 (Hullbridge - CBS) and 60A (Newington Ave - CBS) with both RE's and the VR. The most surprising 'working', perhaps, was the almost total absence of TV Taxis' Shuttles on that day.

The following weekend saw the annual Southend Bus Rally (sadly not blessed with the glorious weather enjoyed the weekend before!). ST's entry comprised PD3 trainer 334, ex Kentish Bus Tiger 562, RM 102 and Fleetline 211 (in its commemorative old livery): unfortunately most photographers were disappointed since virtually all the buses at the rally were parked far too close together - I have taken better pictures in some bus garages! As well as the official entry, 254 was in use at the gate as a ticket office, and former ST PD3 335 and Astromega 604 (now with Fords) were also present. As in 1989 a special shuttle service 7B operated between the park and CBS, offering the chance to sample ex Nottingham Olympians 398/9, open top 904 (in the rain!), RM's 102 & 110 (the latter had worked the morning X11/X1 to/from Aldgate) and Astromega 605.

Route workings

Following the May 13 revisions there is no longer an RM working on the 16 (the journey having been withdrawn): instead, an RM works on 23A M-F, 1816 Leigh Stn-Eastwood Rise and 1838 Eastwood Rise-Leigh Church.

OTHER OPERATORS - South East Essex

District Bus (Tomlin), Wickford: we are now able to give details of the commercial Basildon town services after the revisions of April 2:

100 M-F peaks only, Laindon (Kathleen Ferrier Cres) - Laindon Station - Gt Knightleys - Basildon B/S - The Upway - Fremnells to Fryerns (Southcote Cres); two jnys extended to Grimston Road.

101 M-S, hourly till late afternoon, Laindon (Kathleen Ferrier Cres) - Laindon High Road - Laindon Link - Falstones - Gt Knightleys - Basildon B/S - Metersgate - Fremnells to Fryerns (Southcote Cres).

103 M-S, hourly till mid afternoon, Laindon (Forest Glade - a new housing estate south west of the station) - Nightingales - Mandeville Way - High Rd - Laindon Link - Gt Knightleys - Basildon B/S - Long Riding - Timberlog Lane to Vange (Gordon Road).

104 M-S, hourly till late afternoon - as 101 except via The Upway instead of Metersgate.

106 M-S, 3 jnys late afternoon/early evenings - as 100 but not serving Laindon Station.

The services continue to give quite deep penetration into certain housing estates to reach the parts that EN's big buses cannot reach.

S & M Coaches (Linkfast), Hadleigh: last month's reports about the RM's proved false - RM 44 did not pass to S&M as planned, because the intended sale of ex Leicester PD3 GRY 49D to a Japanese buyer fell through, and RM 550 (ex Clydeside) was only passing through en route to a private buyer in Kent). Sorry for the mistake.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH
TRANSPORT LIMITED



Vehicles

Atlantean 78 was repainted in May 1990, leaving only 64, 67, 69 and 72 with red roofs.

Leyland Tiger demonstrator F682 SRN was used by CBT Coachways as D31 in the first half of May 1990.

Javelin 105 has been resealed to C48FT.

Services

A rail replacement service between Chelmsford and Witham was operated on 20 and 27.5.90. and until 0800 on 3.6.90.

General

A new passenger information system has been installed in the Bus Station by Colchester Borough Council. It is a computer controlled system with a number of different screens to show departure details of the next services, departures to a given destination, special messages and advertisements. Information is also shown on screens in the cafeteria and on the walkway at the upper level car park. Details of all services are given not just CBT and as well as being of benefit to passengers, it gives bus enthusiasts something to look at between buses!

SERVICE REVISIONS IN ESSEX

Braintree

70,X70,370 From 13.5.90. all commercial services on 70,X70 were renumbered 133, whilst from the same date commercial journeys on service 370 were renumbered 233. However journeys between Braintree and Dunmow (Church End) and ECC contracts remain 370. The reason for this is so that all journeys serving Stansted Airport are in a standard range.

330/37/56 Revised from 14.5.90. (corrects 312/4).

Colchester

6 The 0650 ex Old Heath was advanced by 4 minutes by CBT from 21.5.90.

101/2 Revised timetable to be introduced by EN from 2.7.90.

Clacton

106/126 Revised timetable introduced by EN on 27.5.90.

Maldon

95C This service introduced by EN on 24.4.90. was withdrawn on 14.5.90. !

Basildon

400 Revised timetable was introduced on 29.4.90. (corrects 312/6).
501/11 Revised from 21.5.90. (corrects 312/6)
520/21 Revised from 21.5.90. (corrects 312/6).
521 Some M-F evening journeys were revised from 4.6.90.
523 Withdrawn after 19.5.90. Replaced by revised 520/21.
National Express

Summer schedules were introduced on 29.4.90. and run until 27.10.90. London Express services have been withdrawn, with these journeys being renumbered 400. The route is now titled London Express 400 rather than Essex 400. Could members please provide observations of who is operating National Express services in the area for inclusion in the magazine.

Essex County Council

To clarify, correct or mention for the first time, the following Summer Sunday services are operating this year.

602 Colchester- Sudbury- Castle Hedingham- Haverhill- Saffron Walden- Cambridge. One journey each way with a short (!) working each way between Saffron and Colchester. Operation is by Hedinghams and requires one vehicle.
605 Colchester- Frinton- Walton. One journey in each direction with operation by Freemans Travel.
606 Walton- The Oakleys- Harwich. One journey in each direction, using the vehicle off service 605.
612 Romford- Ongar- Braintree- Yeldhams- Sudbury- Colchester. One journey in each direction with a short each way between Colchester and Braintree. Operated by Blue Triangle using an RF.
631 Saffron Walden- Finchingfield- Braintree- Maldon- Burnham. Operated every two hours by Hedingham using 3 vehicles.
In addition Basildon services 241 and 244 have been extended from Pitsea Station to Wat Tyler Country Park.

PUBLICITY

The following have been published recently :-

EN timetable leaflets for services 400 dated 29.4.90.; 33, 70, 133, 233 & 370 dated 13.5.90.; 321, 330 dated 13.5.90.; 353, 354, 355 & 356 dated 14.5.90.; 520/1 dated 20.5.90; 501/11 dated 21.5.90; 1/1A dated 27.5.90.; 3,4 dated 29.5.90.; 74 dated 27.5.90.; 74, 78/78A dated 27.5.90.; 100 dated 27.5.90.; 106/26 dated 27.5.90.;

250,251,551 dated 27.5.90.

Other leaflets include 1990 Essex Ranger; Southend & District Bus Hopper and 5 better ticketing arrangements on EN commuter services.

OTHER OPERATORS- REST OF ESSEX

AVRO Further to Richard Delahoys notes in 312/9, GWA 808N was first noted in the Basildon area on 12.9.89.

BOONS Have sold KTW 796V a Ford/Plaxton to Kings, Stanway.

CHARTERCOACH Have sold Leyland Leopards HBP 331X and JMB 332T to Ensigns and acquired former London Coaches DAF/Berkhof B593 XNO.

COUNTY

SERVICES

With effect from 17.3.90. services 802/3/7 in Harlow were converted to minibus operation. Also from this date a further service in competition with Buzz was introduced. Numbered 3 it operated Mon- Sat offpeak between Bus Station & Sumners/Katherines. This service along with 2,4,5 and 15 became SNB operated ex minibus! Also on this date revised timetables came into operation on services 801-8/11. Service 711 was withdrawn on Sundays after 22.4.90. and was revised on Mon-Sat from the following day. These changes mean that Harlow use LR on services 311 & 383, single deckers on 310A, 500, 502 & 506 plus 2,4,5 & 15 whilst minibuses operate 505,808-811 except some peak journeys which retain SNB. Service 354 is SNB (Tue) and minibus (Sat). In Grays service 303 between Chadwell & Romford was withdrawn on 7.4.90. Service 311 between Waltham Cross & Harlow was revised on 28.4.90. Further to 310/9 County will take up service 66 from 4.8.90. using eight Lynxes from Debden outstation, whilst the 103 starts on 1.9.90. using 14 Northern Counties/Olympians from Grays. Services 2,3,4,5 & 15 were withdrawn on 19.5.90., whilst from the same date in Grays minibus services 377,378 & 383 were revised and service 379 was withdrawn. Further service changes were due in Harlow from 2.6.90. when it is thought that Buzz will be taken over. How passengers in these areas must wish for a timetable that remains the same for more than a couple of months!

VEHICLES

New vehicles to report are G920-32 WGS for the Grays minibus scheme, they are Mercedes 709D/ReeBur B23F. Acquired from Sovereign are similar G912/3 UPP for use at Harlow. Identical G914/5 UPP have been transferred to Harlow from Hoddesdon. Vehicles withdrawn are AN 131, SNB 138,149,150,158,160,162,178,182 and LR 44 and 57-60. LR 67 has also been withdrawn with fire damage. Vehicles passing to the Sampsons, Hoddesdon depot are SNB 143

201,211 ;LR 15,61,64 and minibuses E348/50 SWY. Vehicles passing the other way are minibuses E357 NEG, E700 EHJ. TL 31 has moved from Hoddesdon to Grays with TDL 65 moving the other way. SNB 76 & SNB 211 HA-GY with SNB 221 227,277 plus Lynx 359,371,420 & 840 moving the other way complete recent changes. A number of York & District Leyland Nationals were noted at Harlow during early June it is not known if these are for service with County.

GOODWINS This Black Notley based operator has acquired 987 UYA (ex EPC 904V) a Volvo/ Plaxton Viewmaster.

HARRIS Former London Transport DMS MLH 361L has been sold for scrap.

HEDINGHAM Former EN Bedford YMQS TJN 981W was an unusual sight on service 52 in early June.

LONDON BUSES The appearance of new Renault/Reeve Burgess minibuses at Chelmsford in recent months has been explained by the fact that J. Day of Broomfield is the supplier of these vehicles. They are in use at Bow (BW) but return from time to time, no doubt under warranty. This must be the first bus link between Chelmsford and Bow since service 30 was withdrawn!

STANS SDY 822S has been reregistered GIL 4261.

WALKERS Have been using OMNI demonstrator G370 CAJ on their stage service during May.

OTHER OPERATORS- SOUTH EAST ESSEX (LATE NEWS)

ENSIGNS A further acquisition is 571 (BLS 671V) a low height Metrobus/Alexander H43/30F, latterly with Kelvin Central but originally Alexander Midland MRM2; it replaces an accident damaged VR. On the subject of route workings, the 165 was transferred from PM to DM (Dagenham) on SUNDAYS only from May 13. Finally, to clarify, we only intend to report information under this heading about Ensign's bus services - no attempt will be made to cover the details of the dealership (unless of course you want to send regular reports).

TV TAXIS Another low roof VW to be withdrawn is A578 XKW. A further service cut is the withdrawal of the whole of the TV 29A from May 13, following its short lived (and ill fated) extension to Belgrave Road.

ESSEX BUS REVIEW

Our apologies for the delay in the introduction of this feature to the magazine, however we hope that the delay will be made worthwhile with this the first feature.

Some years ago Andy Meadows produced a draft for a book detailing the history of Eastern Nationals Bristol FLFs. Due to financial constraints and the relatively specialised subject, it was decided not to proceed with publication. It has been decided therefore to serialise the book and publish it here in Essex Bus Review. Having blown the dust off of the covers we now present part one of a very interesting history.

1. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL NOTES

The Bristol F series double deck bus was developed as a successor to the Lodekka LD which had been in production since 1954. Two prototypes were built in 1958; one being 27ft (8.22m) long and classified LDS (Crosville DLG949- 285HFM), the other being 30ft (9.14m) long and classified LDL (Eastern National 1541- 236LNO). The fundamental difference between these prototypes and all previous Lodekkas was the completely flat floor on the lower deck achieved by the revised transmission layout and air suspension to the rear axle. Production of the new F series began in 1959 and over 2000 vehicles were built, the very last being delivered to Midland General in September 1968. In all, four basic variations of the F series were made available; Bristol FS and FSF being the short (27ft) version with rear or front (FSF) entrance; Bristol FL and FLF being the long (30ft) wheelbase with rear or front (FLF) entrance. The choice of Bristol BVW, Gardner 5LW, 6LW or 6LX engine coupled to a four or five speed manual gearbox was available. The most popular of the F series was the FLF variant of which some 1867 were built. From 1964 the FLF was offered with Leylands 0.600 engine and the following year saw the introduction of a 31ft 01/8 th inch (9.44m) long vehicle as a further option. Further options offered in 1967 were the Leyland 0.680 engine and the Bristol/Self Changing Gears 4 or 5 speed semi or fully automatic gearbox.

As with all Bristol chassis built since 1948, the FLF was bodied by Eastern Coach Works (ECW) at Lowestoft. This was a result of the British Transport Commission (BTC) owning the two manufacturers and insisting on their bus operating subsidiaries purchasing their products. In 1963 the BTC sold their manufacturing interests to the Transport Holding Commission (THC) and two years later Bristol chassis and ECW bodies were made available to 'outsiders'. There were however, no Bristol Lodekkas delivered to operators outside the BTC or built with a non ECW body.

In addition to the prototype mentioned above, Eastern National took delivery of two Bristol FS5Gs in 1960 (1569/70- 61/62PPU) and no less than 247 Bristol FLFs between 1960 and 1968. The last of these being withdrawn in 1981. Eastern Nationals FLFs were the second largest fleet of FLFs operated by one company (Bristol Omnibus had 319) and the second largest batch of standard vehicles operated by the company (the Leyland National fleet peaked at 250 in 1985- a figure which we hope will not be surpassed by minibuses!).

All chassis were the FLF type with either the six cylinder Bristol BVW 8.9 litre engine (FLF6B) or Gardner 6LW 8.4 litre engine (FLF6G). All vehicles with F or G suffixed registrations (2610-4, 2884-2931) were fitted with the Gardner 6LX 10.45 litre engine coupled to the S.C.G. 5 speed semi automatic gearbox. This type was specified for London services, the semi-automatic gearbox and bigger engine providing better handling in the ever increasing traffic conditions in and around London.

A number of Bristol engined vehicles were re-engined with Gardner 6LW units as spare parts for the Bristol engines became scarce when withdrawals began in 1976, it was decided to remove Bristol

engined vehicles first or in the case of newer vehicles they would receive Gardner engines removed from withdrawn vehicles. The last FLF6B was 2778 - 991 KOO withdrawn in 8.79. In 1960 when the first FLFs were delivered to Eastern National, a two tier fleetnumbering system was in operation. Three figure numbers for single deckers and four figure numbers for double deckers. Bristol FLFs therefore commenced at number 1571 onwards. On Sunday 9.8.64. the fleet was renumbered to the system that is still with us today with class numbers allocated to each type of vehicle. FLF classes were as follows:- 2600- coaches, 2700 & 2800 for buses with 2900 being used later. The last FLF delivered with an old number was 1683 (BVX 680B) the next being 2805 (BVX681B). The red embossed fleetnumber plates were introduced in 1964, on the FLFs they were fitted on the front above the offside headlamp and on the back at the bottom of the rear emergency door. Pre 1964 fleetnumber plates were black for buses and white for coaches.

A standard fitting on all Bristol F series was air suspension to the rear axle. Eastern National, along with most other FLF operators, found this unit unreliable largely because of the proximity of the air valves to the ground collecting dirt causing the valve to seize. Consequently all Bristol FLFs had their air suspension replaced with coil springs which although being a trouble free unit from the engineers point of view gave a much harder ride than before and led to the familiar rear axle creaking noise associated with the FLFs. A particular problem at Wood Green (WG) depot was that when the aforementioned valve jammed open, air would pump into the suspension out of control thus causing the rear end of the bus to rise by several inches. With Wood Greens very low roof, buses with this defect would often wedge themselves under the roof!

TO BE CONTINUED...

EASTERN NATIONAL ENGINEERING

The remaining workforce of 45 were made redundant during the first week of June. The Essex Chronicle reports that most of them are still owed wages and redundancy payments by the company. On behalf of the group I would like to thank Dave Arnold for all the information he has supplied from Central Works/ENE over the years and hope that it is not very long before he finds another job.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS MONTHS MAGAZINE WERE RECEIVED FROM :-
R Dennis, P Harvey, I Mayoh, A Meadows, M Mowle,
A Osborne, C Sigston, J Simpkin, P Snell, D Stebbing, G Toon,
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Grey Green Enthusiasts Club, LOTS, PSV Circle and Southend Transport.

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT MONTHS MAGAZINE IS 4.7.90.
PLEASE NOTE THE REVISED DATE.

EASTERN NATIONAL FLEET ALLOCATION JUNE 1990

Basildon (BN)	1116/18/24/26 1404-06/10-12/22-24 1742/44/48/52/55/63/67/72/76/85/86/89/95 1797/1808/18/20/22/36/47/48/49/52/53/54 1866/77-80/83/84/86/87/89/91/96/98/1904 1908/22 2200 3117/20 4500
Bishops Stortford (BS)	1111/27 1501/2 1741/69/92/1843/44/1909 1910/14/16 4510
Braintree (BE)	0120 1308/09/10 1120/25 1745/82/1812/13 1828/61/62/72/1924/26/29/30/31/32 3055/63/84/3128 4016/17/20/21
Brentwood (BD)	0201/25-44 0755/6 1113/22 1791/1839 1845/46/59/76/81/1902/03/12/13 3082 3206 4012/18/19
Chelmsford (CF)	0750-3 1112/19/21/28-30 1401/02/13-15 1426-29 1747/74/75/78/1804/05/11/19/24 1827/32/42/50/51/55/56/60/67/70/74/90/99 1901/17 2201/03 3054/57/69/77/83/91-93 3106/11/12 4005/13 4511/12
Clacton (CN)	0200/02-19 1110/17 1766/68/1831/34/41 1927/37-39 2202 3041/3109/3201-3
Colchester (CR)	1760/93/1816/65/1923/25/33/35/36 3052/56/59/61/64/66/78/95/3103/14/27 3204/18 4003/04/06/15 4501/03/09
Gt. Dunmow (DW)	1408
Hadleigh (HH)	1400/09/17-21 1738/43/53/56/57/58/61/65 1770/71/77/81/84/1817/21/35/40/57/64/69 1871/95/97/1900/19 3085/97/99
Harwich (DT)	1123 1500 1754/90/1885 3050 4007/08 4014
Maldon (MN)	1114/15 1403/07/16/25 1750/64/1806/29 1833/63/73/92 3038/53/58/60/79/94/3200
Ponders End (PD)	0245-52/57 3068/71/72/74/75/76/80/81 3100/01/02/04/3205/07/08/09/11-17
South Woodham (SW)	1921 3070
Southend (SD)	1762/73/80/87/88/98/99/1809/14/23/30/37/38 1868/75/88/93/1906/07/15/18 3065/67/73/86 3087-90/98/3108/13/22/29 4000-2/09-11 4502/04-08
Walthamstow (WW)	0253-56/58-60 0800-04 1779/96/1800-03 1810/25/26/82/94/1905/11/20 3096/3105 3107/10/15/16/18/19/21/23-26
Walton-on-Naze (WN)	0220-24
Pool Vehicles	0121 0754 1721/25/40 3033/49 2383/84 3500/01
Delicensed Disposal	1737/51 3048/51/62

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Colchester Borough Transport operated ECC Summer Sunday service 601 between Colchester and Saffron Walden last year. The normal vehicles employed on this route were Leopards 101 & 102. Here 101 is seen having arrived in Saffron Walden.

(I Ransom)