

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 712 August 2023



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



fb.me/essexbus





Above & Below: First Essex's last two ALX 400 bodied vehicles, Volvo B7TLs 32482 (AU53 HJZ) and 32483 (AU53 HKA), have surprisingly transferred from Chelmsford to First Eastern Counties at Norwich.

32482 is seen **above** on route 23A at Longwater Retail Park on 24 July 2023. **Kevin Smith**

32483 is seen **below** on route 11 at Castle Meadow on 21st. **David Bell**

A photo of 32483 in Chelmsford was in EBM 710.

Front Cover: And soon afterwards two vehicles transferred from First Eastern Counties at Ipswich to Colchester, although only for short term loan, StreetDecks 35917 (BN72 TVL) and 35921 (BN72 TVT). 35921 is seen on route 75 in Maldon High Street on 25 July 2023.

Dave Arnold

More details on all these on page 12.

Inside Front Cover: More food and drink. Following on from last month's photos of buses converted to hospitality outlets, here is former Southend Corporation Transport Leyland PD3/6 / Massey 313 (PHJ 952) in Florida, USA. **Dennis Perez.**

More details on page 6.



Group Information

Chair & Meetings
Secretary
Treasurer & Membership
Distribution, Publication & Sales
Publications Co-ordinator
Tours Organiser

Ian Ransom
Alan Osborne
Richard Delahoy
Owen Woodliffe
Paul Harvey
Wayne Bell

Missing or Defective EBM's
Please contact Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road,
Chingford, E4 8PT
pat_woodliffe@hotmail.com
Owen stocks a wide range of colour photos, please
send an SAE for details.

Editorial Team

Editor & First Essex and Central Connect

Adam Kelleher
74 Park Road
Brentwood, Essex
CM14 4TU
adamxxxx4@yahoo.co.uk

Arriva Southend & Colchester

Richard Delahoy, address opposite
(Arriva Harlow notes to Adam Kelleher,
address above)

Ensignbus and Hedingham & Chambers

Mark Lloyd
133 Hazelton Road
Colchester, Essex CO4 3DY
lloydhousehold448@gmail.com

Service Revisions, Panther Travel, Lodge Coaches and Publicity

Ian Ransom, ianransom2008@googlemail.com

Stephensons & NIBS

Richard Delahoy, address opposite

Smaller Operators

Roger A Smith, 3 Station Mews
Station Road, Witham, Essex
CM8 2FP

Ipswich Buses in Essex

Robert Appleton, rcappleton29@gmail.com

Vectare

Chris Stewart, shenfield252@gmail.com

Subscriptions

A calendar year subscription is £26. New members
may join from any month, but subscriptions will always
run to December from whichever month the member
chooses. Those joining from February to December
inclusive pay a pro-rata subscription calculated at
£2.30 per month. For example, a member joining in
March would pay 10 x £2.30, i.e., £23. Please
contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road,
Southend-on-Sea, SS1 3TT
richard.delahoy@blueyonder.co.uk

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 713

Reports to Sub-Editors	26 August
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	1 September
Dispatch by Printers on or before	9 September

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent
up to 2nd 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.

© Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group 2023

www.essexbus.org.uk

fb.me/essexbus

Printed by

Directcds Ltd, Unit 2, Gentlemans Field, Westmill Road, Ware,
Hertfordshire SG12 0EF
01920 465023

www.directcds.co.uk

Group Notices

Group Meetings

Our regular Chelmsford meetings return in the autumn and will be held at The Quaker Meeting House, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2QL. This is the same venue where meetings were held before being halted by the pandemic and is a five-ten minute walk from Chelmsford Bus & Railway Stations. These will be on **Wednesday** evenings, doors open for a social chat at 1900, with the presentation starting at 1945. 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. On street parking in the evenings is available on Rainsford Road, Broomfield Road and Coval Lane. 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. Dates organised for 2023 are:

20 September Alan Osborne - Buses of Essex
15 November Robert Appleton - Eastern Counties Omnibus Company from 1970 onwards
13 December Richard Delahoy - Buses 20 years ago.

The 2024 programme will be announced in due course.

An additional meeting, which is being held in the afternoon, on **Saturday 28 October**, 1400 for 1430 start, is a presentation by Anthony Delaine Smith, the 2023 President of the OS, and Managing Director of Delaine Buses. This is at the Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, which is located between the Railway Station and Retail Market. All members of EBEG are invited to attend.

The Running Card

Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Sunday 13 August: Big Bus Show, Stonham Barns, Stowmarket IP14 6AT.

Saturday 19 August: Running Day at Imber.

Sunday 20 August: Mini Bus Rally & Car Meet, Lodge's Garage, High Easter CM1 4QR.

Sunday 3 September: Key Publishing Bus Festival, Sywell Aerodrome, Northants NN6 OBN.

Saturday 9 September: Delaine Bus Museum Open Day & Heritage Bus Rides Bourne PE10 9LE.

Sunday 10 September: Free heritage bus service around King's Lynn serving heritage properties.

Saturday 16 September: Enfield Transport Bazaar. St Stephens Hall, Village Road, Bush Hill Park, Enfield EN1 2EY.

Group Stall at this Event

Sunday 17 September: Canvey Transport Museum Open Day.

Sunday 1 October: Chesham Running Day

Saturday 17 October: NLTs Transport Bazaar. Theydon Bois Village Hall CM16 7ER.

Sunday 22 October: TransportFest. London Bus Museum, Brooklands.

Sunday 22 October: Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum Open Day, North Hykeham, Lincolnshire.

Events are published in good faith. However, the Group cannot be responsible for any changes due to future circumstances. Please check before travelling.

Below: Heritage Southend Transport liveried Volvo 3816 (GN07 AVC) being recovered by LJ Transportation from London Road, West Leigh after failing on service 1 at 1234 en-route to Rayleigh on 24 July 2023. **John Simmons** (with thanks to John G Lidstone). This vehicle is now parked out of use in the depot. More details on page 22.



Follow Ups to EBM 711

Basildon Bus Station

Last month we recorded that the first use of town centre bus stops outside what was to become the bus station was on 4 May 1958. But the first service to reach the New Town was five years earlier, as **Alan Osborne** explains.

Route 84 was the first service to penetrate into the New Town and did so on **23 August 1953, 70 years ago this month**. Before the New Town was built, Basildon was a small village community at the end of Church Lane, served by Campbells of Pitsea. The 84 was the first service to specifically serve the New Town roads as opposed to the existing Campbells services on the old road network. This was achieved by diverting existing short working journeys on Westcliff 2b (Southend to Grays) which ran Grays to South Benfleet, Tarpots Corner. These were diverted at Pitsea to run to Whitmore Way in the developing New Town, instead of Tarpots, and were renumbered from W2b to 84. Hence giving a Grays-Pitsea-Whitmore Way service, as per the timetable leaflet **right**. However, since the whole area was a massive construction site, the route had to approach via Rectory Road, Burnt Mills Road and Timberlog Lane. The terminal point was not initially specified (at that

LEAFLET No. 80

WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA

NEW SERVICE 84

GRAYS—PITSEA— BASILDON

(Whitmore Way)

COMMENCING
SUNDAY, 23rd AUGUST, 1953

ROUTE : From Grays by Normal Route via Homesteads to Pitsea, thence via Rectory Road, Burnt Mills Road, Timberlog Lane to Whitmore Way. Return as outward reversed.

From Grays (War Memorial)
8.7 (S), 9.7 (NSu), 10.7 a.m. and every hour until 9.7 p.m.
(10.7 p.m. to Pitsea only).

From Basildon (Whitmore Way)
7.12 (NSu), 8.5 (NSu), 9.12 a.m. and every hour until 9.12 p.m.
NSu—Not Sundays. S—Saturdays only.

NOTE : The above Service will take the place of the existing short journeys between Grays and South Benfleet (Tarpots Corner) on Service 2b.

For Full Details of the above Service, together with Services W2, W2b and 70, see pages 2-5.

REGULATIONS AND CONDITIONS.—Passengers are conveyed subject to the advertised conditions contained in the current official Time Table Booklets, obtainable (Price 1/-) at any of the Company's Offices, or in any separate notices.

THE WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA MOTOR SERVICES LTD.

17/21 London Road, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA 'Phone 49411	Head Offices : New Writtle Street, CHELMSFORD 'Phone 3431 (4 lines)	North Road, BRENTWOOD 'Phone 1204 Leigh Beck, CANVEY ISLAND 'Phone 47
--	---	--

WMS. 80/11753

Index Publishers Limited, Dunstable and London.

14341 5 M

time Whitmore Way was still under construction and the buses just went along the road as far as they could until the houses ran out) but in the 1 June 1954 timetable was given as Grimston Road, just a little way along.

Whitmore Way was the first New Town main thoroughfare and was named after the then Lord Lieutenant of Essex. The service was run by Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services, then under control of Eastern National. A W-prefix to some route numbers appeared in the combined Eastern National and Westcliff timetables for the period, to indicate that it was operated by Westcliff and to avoid confusion where Westcliff and EN numbers were duplicated. However, the prefix did not appear on bus blinds.

In the new route numbering scheme from autumn 1955, bringing the erstwhile Westcliff, City and Hicks routes into a common number series with Eastern National and ending duplication of numbers (as explained in EBM Extra 1), the 84 became number 248 (subtle reversal of digits and into the new 24x series). Route 248 ceased on 3 May 1958, the day before the new stops outside what was to become the bus station came into use, as part of a wider set of revisions then which were consequent on the opening of the first part of Basildon Town Centre. Previously, buses took residents to Pitsea for shopping.

I happily remember in those early days riding my bicycle along Whitmore Way, just to see how far it went! Later, building had been completed as far as Quendon Road, which became the terminal point for new town service W44, running half hourly from Pitsea Station via Vange (on a more direct route) which commenced in 1954. It was renumbered 244 and became one of the key town services. 'Town service' is used here to mean a local route purely within the New Town, as opposed to 84 (248) which was a longer distance service that provided the first local service within the New Town area.

Eastern National took over Campbells' bus services in February 1956 and their routes were numbered into the new EN series as 231-6. The subsequent development of services in the New Town were chronicled by David Domin in the 1970 Omnibus Society booklet 'Buses in Basildon'. An article about early bus operations in Basildon, with more about the depot in Bull Road, Vange is being prepared and is scheduled to appear in the Autumn 2024 edition of Essex Bus Magazine Extra. This will include more on the W44.

Additional information provided by **Richard Delahoy**.

Last month we included extracts from a leaflet explaining the 1985/86 refurbishment of Basildon Bus Station. We didn't have room to include the following extract, but we thought it would be interesting to show the routes that served the bus station in autumn 1985. The stands referred to were illustrated on page 30 last month, obviously they changed as the refurbishment progressed.

Only one route number survives to this day, the 256, a remarkable survivor of the 1955 numbering scheme. It is now extended beyond Billericay to Ramsden Heath, but only operates one journey each way (plus an additional short am journey from Dunton to Billericay Railway Station) on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays only. Ironically this now tendered service only returned to First Essex (successor to Eastern National) in July last year. However, it is potentially under threat in the latest ECC tendered services consultation.

WHICH STAND FOR WHICH BUS?					
BUS STATION CONCOURSE			BUS STATION ISLAND		
STAND	SERVICE NO.	DESTINATION	STAND	SERVICE NO.	DESTINATION
L	152/153/154	Chelmsford	1	153/158/547	Industrial Areas
M	151	Romford		232	Shotgate
N	Tesco	Pitsea (Tesco)		156	Stanford-le-Hope
	229	Noak Bridge		255	Queens Park (Billericay)
	256	Queens Park, Billericay		257	Bulphan
P	400	Kings Cross		522	Laindon
	401/403	Romford	2	504/505/506/524	Laindon/Southfields Ind. Area
	2/234/235/237/503	Basildon Hospital	3	511	Westley Road
	151 (Sunday)	Basildon Hospital		109/X1	London
	155/156	Stanford-le-Hope/Grays	4	795	Gatwick/Brighton
Q	402	Dartford/Victoria		510/520	Westley Road (Langdon Hills)
	507	North Benfleet	5	521	Southfields Industrial Area
R	152/153/154	Grays		230	Beauchamps (Wickford)
S	401	Ashlyns		233	Shotgate
	505	Cranes Industrial Area		234/235	Billericay
	Park & Ride (Saturday)	Basildon Zoo & Pippys Hill (STC)		2	South Woodham Ferrers
T	503/504/524/511	Pitsea	6	494	Maldon
U	510/520	Pitsea		2	Southend
	521	Burnt Mills Industrial Area	7	151	Canvey
				522/547	Pitsea
			8	549	Pitsea/Ind. Areas/Westley Road
				400/402	Southend
			9	548	Cranes Industrial Area
				109/X1/795	Southend

Food & Drink

Hot on the heels of the report last month about the ex-Colchester / Southend / Talisman Olympian H47 MJN now in use as a 'The Pizza Revolution' in the USA (see also page 8), we have news of former Southend Transport 313 (PHJ 952), a Leyland PD3/6 with Massey body. Originally a lowbridge closed top bus, it was converted to open top in 1971. After withdrawal by Southend Transport in June 1980, the PSV Circle recorded its history as follows:

Ensignbus Co Ltd (dealer), Grays 9/80; G Schwartz, Hotel el la Cucagna, Disentis, Switzerland 10/80; SSR Reisen {Suntrekkers}, Zurich, Switzerland c1983-1984; Suntrekkers Ltd, Chepstow 5/84; noted at Ensignbus Co Ltd (dealer) Grays 3/85 in brown and yellow livery advertising Mumm Champagne, with Southend fleet name, British registration and having been fitted with platform doors; still there 2/86, may have been still owned by Suntrekkers Ltd, Chepstow at this time and until 4/87; London Bus Export Co (dealer), Chepstow 6/87.

We think it was used for hire and advertising contracts whilst at London Bus Export Co, and odd pictures of it surfaced from time to time. Then in 2022 it was advertised for sale:

"1958 Leyland Titan PD3 open topper bus. This is an ex Sundecker Tour bus that was converted for promoting Mumm Champagne at the UK Sailing Championships. It has now been coach painted in classic London red livery and has a back-lit reclaimed hardwood bar with polished stainless panels. The serving area faces the inner saloon and to a passing clientele outside via twin opening hatches. The upper deck has a set of original bus seats that can be easily removed or re-disposed with tables in a configuration to suit the event of the day. This deck is fully waterproofed and furnished with high-capacity storm drains; there are three large adjustable parasols which afford a good measure of protection from the elements. The original open platform has been given security doors for its new role. Mechanically this vehicle is as good as its appearance and it will have a new MOT for the new owner".

Courtesy of **Peter Hadfield** and the **British Buses in the USA and Canada** Facebook page, we can now report that it was bought by the Sarasota Polo Club, Florida, for use as a food / drink bus and is known as 'The Hemingway'. USA Customs state that it was shipped from Southampton on the 'Donington' and processed at Jacksonville on 15 July 2022. The photo on the **inside front cover**, shows it in use. The interior shot at **the top of the opposite page** is taken from the sale particulars, showing how Southend simply panelled over the sunken gangway when it was converted to open top, rather than removing it. The bus features in a number of posts on the Polo Club's Facebook page, where it is promoted thus: "The Sarasota Polo Club now boasts an authentic London Bus called 'The Hemingway'. Stop by and purchase a cocktail from her, as she boasts a bar on her interior!". Not sure though about the 'authentic' tag! It was in red with LT fleet names whilst with London Bus Export Co, so perhaps we can excuse their confusion. From that FB page, we can also show, **right**, how the top deck now looks, complete with the giant parasols. A far cry from Southend seafront!



As for the rest of the batch of six buses, known locally as the 'long Leylands', 311-6 (PHJ 950-5), they are spread far and wide:

311 B Draeger/Tradionsbus, Berlin, current status not known. This bus was illustrated on page 16 of EBN 684 near Hanover in a photo taken in 2005.

312 Jesada Technik Museum, Nakhon Chaisri, Nakhon Pathom province, Thailand since at least 2008. A recent picture (24 June 2023) on their Facebook page shows it undergoing mechanical repairs. It carries a fake registration, NML 622E, which of course really belongs to ex-London Transport RML2622, which is also at the museum. The photo **at the bottom of the opposite page**, courtesy of the **Museum's Facebook** page, shows 312 in use on Christmas Day 2022. Whilst looking at this Facebook page, Richard Delahoy was amazed to see that their collection of various UK buses also includes ex-Colchester Borough Transport 48, YWC 648F. This Massey bodied Leyland Atlantean was converted to open top in Colchester and later ran in Liverpool. It has probably been in Thailand since 2012. What a coincidence to find two former Essex municipal open topplers in the same museum on the other side of the world!

313 Sarasota Polo Club, Florida, as reported above.

314 Dover Transport Museum.

315 Still closed top. R & J Gent, based at Canvey Island Transport Museum, restored.

316 Still closed top. Last recorded with unknown owner at Cottbus, Germany, 1995.

Any updates to this list would be appreciated.

See pages 22-23 for the latest news of another ex-Southend Transport bus that is a hospitality vehicle in the USA.





Above: The bus illustrated on page 1 of last month's issue as 'The Pizza Revolution' at the Farm 57 Market in Evansville, Indiana, USA. All Leyland Olympian H47 HJN seen during its brief stay with Lynx, Norfolk after its departure from Talisman and before export, laying over in Hunstanton bus station in between school duties on 23 January 2018. **David Bell**

Ensignbus Ethos

Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit writes:

"I enjoyed reading Roger French's report on the talk given by Peter and Ross Newman to the Young Bus Managers Network, and the comments regarding the importance of driver feedback. I met Peter many years ago, in Super Coach / Upminster & District days. We were at Brentwood Railway Station on an emergency rail call out, and I was impressed by his friendly rapport with the drivers. The report brought back a memory from about 1957/8.

"My father was on the newly created four-man OMO rota at Eastern National's Chelmsford depot. Their schedules were mostly on lightly trafficked rural routes, but they did have one 'main road' run. This was a close-of-day workers trip from Marconi's factory in New Street to Southend. They were preceded from New Street by a crew operated journey from Hoffmann's Works, some 10 minutes earlier. The crew bus operated via the bus station, as a normal service bus, whereas the OMO bus ran direct. As a consequence the two buses were close together from Rettendon to Southend, with very few passengers between them. After a layover at Victoria Station, the single decker was scheduled as a Relief (duplicate in today's parlance) back home, but again with insufficient passengers to justify two buses.

"Dad went to see the Local Traffic Superintendent (LTS) with a suggestion that the few passengers on the saloon could be transferred to the service bus at Rettendon, and the empty bus could return 'dead' to CF, where it would be available for more lucrative work. This was rejected out of hand, along with the advice "We employ people at Head Office to come up with ideas. You should stick to driving your bus, and leave the thinking to the brains department". Needless to say, shortly afterwards duty OMO 3 was altered to terminate at Rettendon School, transfer passengers to duty xx bus, and "car to Garage". An extra service was added to the shift to use the time now available. No doubt that the LTS received an accolade from Head Office for 'his' money saving suggestion!"

712 for EBM 712



Last month we featured C711 GEV and SYU 711S, this month we feature the next in sequence of each but in different liveries.

Above: Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R / ECW H45/32F 4006 (C712 GEV) allocated to Harwich (DT). New in 1985, it is in 1986 Eastern National livery on route 104 on Harwich Station Approach on 9 March 1991. **Robert Appleton**
A recent photo, also taken by Robert, of a double-decker on this route at the same location is on page 15.

Below: Grey Green Leyland Leopard / Duple Dominant SYU 712S in the livery of the short lived consortium 'British Coachways' at Stamford Hill, London Garage on 17 April 1981. New to the World Wide Fleet and later cascaded to Grey Green. The sticker in the windscreen reads 'British Coachways, Thames Tyne Express, Operated by Grey Green'. **Fred Lawrance**



24 July 2023 (additional information to EBM 711)

9 (M-F) Wickford Circular **Vectare**. Withdrawn due to low passenger demand.

10 (M-S) Basildon Hospital - Shotgate, Uxbridge Close **Vectare**. Section of route between Shotgate Post Office and Uxbridge Close withdrawn due to low passenger demand. In addition, the section of route via Beauchamps Estate is only served towards Shotgate. Revised timetable, with a more even two-hourly headway.

13/A/B/C (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Epping St Margaret's Hospital **Vectare**. Revised timetable on M-F, with earlier and later evening journeys. Minor changes to Saturday morning journeys towards Waltham Cross.

14/B (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Uphire Shops **Vectare**. Revised evening timetable on M-F and all day Saturdays.

20 (M-S) Harlow Bus Station - Brays Grove School **Vectare**. Additional morning and evening journey on M-F, revised timetable on Saturday.

22/A (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Waltham Abbey, Shernbrooke Road circular **Vectare**. Revised timetable on M-F only.

505 (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Harlow, Templefields Tesco **Vectare**. Revised timetable on all days. Early morning journey from Harlow no longer serves Summers.

24 & 25 August

AIRBUS Clacton Shopping Village - Marine Parade East **Hedingham**. Operates on these days only in connection with the Clacton Airshow.

1 September

104 (Sch only) Bradwell-on-Sea, St Peters Court - Burnham Ormiston Rivers Academy. Operation passes from **Stephensons** to **Fords of Althorne**.

DAN001 (Sch only) Maldon, Ben Cobey Avenue - Colchester Schools **Flagfinders**. Service withdrawn (in practice on the last day of the summer term in July).

3 September

8 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Old Harlow Post Office **Arriva**. Revised route and timetable.

10 (Daily) Harlow Town Railway Station - Church Langley Tesco **Arriva**. Revised timetable.

48 (Sch only) Basildon Laindon Link - Shenfield School **NIBS**. Service withdrawn (in practice on the last day of the summer term in July).

49 (Sch only) Basildon, The Watermill - Brentwood, The Chase **NIBS**. Revised route and timetable.

51 (Sch only) Chafford Hundred Railway Station - Prittlewell, Highfield Gardens **NIBS**. Revised timetable.

59 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Chelmsford Anglia Ruskin University **Arriva**. Revised timetable.

101 (Sch only) Mayland Huntsman & Hounds - Burnham Ormiston Rivers Academy. Operation passes from **Fords of Althorne** to **Stephensons**.

308 (M-S) Bishops Stortford Thorley Park - Bishops Stortford Interchange **Arriva**. Revised timetable.

309 (Daily) Bishops Stortford Thorley Park - Stansted Airport Bus Station **Arriva**. Revised timetable.

313/314 (M-S) Great Dunmow, Ongar Road - Saffron Walden, Mortimers Gate **Stephensons**. Revised route and timetable.

417 (Sch only) Rayne Welsh Princess - Newport Joyce Franklin Academy **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.

419 (Sch only) Great Sailing Church - Newport Joyce Franklin Academy **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.

431 (Sch only) Blackmore Bus Terminal - Shenfield School **NIBS**. Revised timetable.

473 (Sch only) Ongar Four Wantz - Brentwood, The Chase **NIBS**. Revised timetable.

475 (Sch only) Stanford-le-Hope Rookery Corner - Brentwood, The Chase **NIBS**. Revised timetable.

508/9/10 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Stansted Airport Bus Station **Arriva**. Revised timetable.

721 (Sch only) Thorrington, Brightlingsea Road - Manningtree School **Stephensons**. Revised route and timetable.

4 September

18 (M-F) Haverhill Bus Station - Clare Stour Valley Community School **Star Cabs**. Revised timetable.

21 (M-S) Brentwood Rail Station - Ongar Four Wantz **NIBS**. Revised timetable.

43 (Sch only) Billericay School - Shotgate, NIBS Depot **NIBS**. Revised timetable.

44/45 (Sch only) Shotgate, NIBS Depot - Billericay Mayflower School **NIBS**. Revised timetable.

- 46** (Sch only) Great Berry, Aylesbury Drive - Billericay Mayflower School **NIBS**. Revised timetable.
- 50** (Sch only) Shotgate, NIBS Depot - Ingatestone Anglo European School **NIBS**. Revised timetable.
- 81** (M-S) Brentwood Rail Station - Hutton (circular) **NIBS**. Revised timetable.
- 513** (Sch only) Witham, Maltings Lane - Southchurch High School for Girls **Stephensons**. Revised route and timetable.
- 676** (Sch only) Little Waltham, Ash Tree Corner - Colchester Schools **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.
- 807** (Sch only) Foulness, Courtsend - Rochford King Edmund School **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.
- 808** (Sch only) Great Wakering, Lansdowne Corner - Rochford King Edmund School **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.
- 810** (Sch only) Bournes Green Roundabout - Rochford King Edmund School **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.
- 811** (Sch only) Great Wakering Red Lion - Rochford King Edmund School **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.
- 812** (Sch only) Stonebridge Ye Olde Shoulderstick - Rochford King Edmund School **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.
- 813** (Sch only) Stonebridge, Mummerys Nursery - Rochford King Edmund School **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.
- 817** (Sch only) Southchurch, Cokefield Avenue - Westcliff Schools **Stephensons**. Revised route and timetable.

Outside of our area, **Stephensons** are making minor changes from 4 September to routes **11/12** (Cambridge - Newmarket), **12A** (Newmarket Town Service), **14/15** (Bury St Edmunds - Haverhill), **16/A** (Newmarket - Bury St Edmunds), **25** (Hundon - Haverhill) and **112** (Newmarket - Ely).



Chris Stewart

Further to EBM 710, following 214 (RX23 TFK), another Mercedes Benz Sprinter / EVM Cityline noted working in Essex recently was all white 217 (RX23 TUV). It is seen at The Talbot, North Weald terminus at 1508 on a very wet 2 August 2023. Essex County Council would not agree to renumbering their 418 route but Vectare have used their preferred number 18 for its extension from St Margaret's Hospital to North Weald. The blind shows that this is a through service (18 North Weald to St Margaret's, continues as 418 St Margaret's to Loughton). **Owen Woodliffe**. The previous day this minibus had operated on the 61/C, Brentwood to Blackmore. Then on 4 August, 218 (RX23 TUV) was also seen on routes 18 / 418, also all white but with Vectare fleet names.



Acquired Vehicles

33992	SN65	OGH	SFDB32BR2FGX18557	F415/17	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No. 1)
33994	SN65	OGK	SFDB32BR2FGX18559	F415/19	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No. 1)
33995	SN65	OGL	SFDB32BR2FGX18560	F415/20	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No. 1)
33996	SN65	OGM	SFDB32BR2FGX18561	F415/21	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No. 1)
33997	SN65	OGO	SFDB32BR2FGX18562	F415/22	H45/29F	11/15	First Glasgow (No. 1)
33998	SN65	OGP	SFDB32BR2FGX18563	F415/23	H45/29F	12/15	First Glasgow (No. 1)

ADL E40D / Enviro 400 MMC. Acquired from First Glasgow, collected from Glasgow (Blantyre depot) and driven to Basildon (33992) and Chelmsford (the rest) on 16 July 2023. In Urban 2 livery with white fronts.

The full batch with First Essex are now 33981/83-89/91-92/94-98.

33992/4/5 entered service on 18 July, the latter two replacing the last two ALX bodied vehicles in the fleet, 32482/3, which, after working from Chelmsford in the morning, moved to First Eastern Counties at Norwich (see below). 33996 entered service on 21 July, 33997 on 24th and 33998 on 1 August. Further to last month, 33981 entered service on 10 July and 33991 the next day. Photos of 33991 and 33994 are on page 16.

Vehicles on Loan

From Monday 24 July, First Eastern Counties StreetDecks 35917 (BN72 TVL) and 35921 (BN72 TVT) were on loan to Colchester from Ipswich (they had been collected the previous day). They are in Ipswich Reds livery. They worked various S routes and country services. Their last day in service with First Essex was Thursday 3 August and they were back in use at Ipswich the next morning. A photo of 35917 is on page 18 and 35921 on the front cover.

Allocation Changes

BN-Basildon; CF-Chelmsford; CR-Colchester; HH-Hadleigh; PT-Purfleet (Ensignbus); DS-Driving School; FG-First Group cascade (to / from another First company); oos-out of service.

Period 4 2023/24 (25 June - 22 July)

32482 CF-FG, 32483 CF-FG, 32484 CF (oos)-Disposal, 32530 CR-CR (oos), 32531 CR-CR (oos), 32532 CR-CR (oos), 32547 CR-CR (oos), 33504 BN (oos)-BN, 33552 BN-BN (oos), 33981 FG-BN, 33991 FG-BN, 33992 FG-BN, 33994 FG-CF, 33995 FG-CF, 33996 FG-CF, 33997 FG-CF (oos), 33998 FG-CF (oos), 34432 PT-CF (loan), 37134 CR (oos)-CR, 42956 CF (oos)-Disposal, 63328 CR (oos)-CR, 63331 CR-CR (oos), 63337 CR-CR (oos), 63339 CR-CR (oos), 63383 BN-BN (oos), 66796 CF-CF (oos), 66814 CF-CF (oos), 67168 BN-BN (oos), 67189 BN-BN (oos), 67191 BN-CR, 67192 BN-CR, 67193 BN-CR, 67738 CF-CF (oos), 67805 CR-CF, 69024 CF-CF (oos), 69908 BN (oos)-Disposal, 69910 BN (oos)-Disposal, 69919 BN (oos)-Disposal

Disposals

69908 to Ensignbus, June 2023.

32484, 69910, 69919 to Ensignbus, July 2023. 32484 then on to PVS, Barnsley later the same month.

32482, 32483 to First Eastern Counties at Norwich, 18 July 2023. Both had been new to First Eastern Counties in October 2003 for Norwich Park & Ride and had been acquired by First Essex in July 2011. (32484 the same.)

42956 sold July 2023. Buyer not known, but given previous reports, it has likely to have gone for private preservation.

Further to last month, 69902 and 69913 moved on from Ensignbus to Shelton Motors, Ramsey and 69918 moved on from Ensignbus to PVS Barnsley, all in July 2023. All for scrap.

Re-seated Vehicles

Further to EBN 709, 67161 and 67194 have returned from reseating and repainting at ADL Harlow. The former has had luggage racks removed and additional seats fitted, the latter the opposite. 67161 is now at Chelmsford, ex Basildon, now in red shuttles livery ex-Essex Airlink blue. It re-entered service on 31 July on route C1.

67194 arrived at Quayside, Colchester on 4 August, it is now Airlink Blue ex-Park & Ride black.



Repaints

67161 - as noted on previous page. It is seen **above** at South Woodham Ferrers on route 336 on its second day back in service, 1 August 2023. **Dave Arnold**

Further to last month, 67193 was at Colchester on 10 July, fully branded for new Essex Airlink route X20 (although the branding does not include the route number). Prior to repaint it was in black Park & Ride livery.

67192 joined it at Colchester in Essex Airlink livery with route X20 branding by 14th.

67191 was seen back at Basildon after repaint, also into Essex Airlink livery with route X20 branding, on 19th, prior to its transfer to Colchester.

67190 was seen repainted into Essex Airlink livery with route X20 branding at Mardens on 21st.

67190 (July 2022), 67191 & 67192 (both June) had only been repainted into Essex Bus green last year.

67194 - as noted on previous page.

Photos of 67192 and 67193 are on page 17.

Around the Depots

(All vehicles listed below allocated to relevant depot except where stated. All dates July 2023 except where stated.)

Colchester

Colchester's scrap line is filling up again. On 8th it contained 32530, 32531 and 32628. On 29th, 32530 and 32531 had been joined by 32547, 63331 and 63337 (32628 had returned to service on 14th), with 32532 being parked in front of the workshops. 63331 has severe front end accident damage and 63337 seems to have had a minor fire in its engine compartment.

67192 was on display in Colchester High Street on 22nd, the day before the start of route X20.

Green 67165 was on loan from Basildon for use on X20 from 23 July to 4 August. On 4th it operated X20 in the morning and X10 in the afternoon!

On the first day of X20, 23rd: 47697, 67165, 67191, 67192 (operated the first journey), 67193 (so a mix of red, green and blue!). On 320 first day, 24th: 37054, 37613.

The 1605 M-F 86 from Colchester to West Mersea, which returns dead, is now worked by a vehicle off the X20.

67190 re-entered service after repaint and transfer from Basildon to Colchester on 27th. 67194 re-entered service after repaint & fitting of luggage racks and transfer from Basildon to Colchester on 5 August. Both on X20. 37621 on X20 (28th, 4 & 5 August). 37613 on X20 (29th). Green 69519 has been a regular on X20.

News of the Harwich routes (29 June-3 August). Compared to previous months, this period has seen a large increase in double-deckers: 37015 on 29 June, 37035 on 5 July: 0915 Mistley - Colchester 104.

37053 on 29 June, 37140 on 5 July, 37007 on 6th, 37010 on 10th, 37017 on 28th: 1005, 1335, 1635 Colchester - Harwich 104 and 1135, 1500, 1805 return journeys.

37035 on Saturday 8th: 1600 Colchester - Harwich 104 and 1730 return.

37035 on Sunday 9th: 1405 Colchester - Harwich 102 and 1545 return, unusual to see a double-decker on a Sunday.

32629 on Saturday 15th, 32669 on Saturday 29th: started on 0800 Harwich - Colchester 104, stayed on 104 and finished on 1400 Harwich - Colchester 104.

37140 on Saturday 29th: 1900 Colchester - Harwich 104.

37135 on 1 August: started on 0715 Colchester - Harwich 104, stayed on 103/104, finished on 1705 Harwich - Colchester 104.

35921, on loan from First Eastern Counties, on 1 August: 1735 Colchester - Harwich 104, 1900 Harwich - Colchester 102, replaced by 32628 on 2035 Colchester - Harwich 102.

At the beginning of July the six Volvo B7RLEs 69515 - 69520 were quite common, but from 23rd when the school holidays started they were less so with 69519 a regular on X20 and 69520 out of service with faults. Of the ADL Enviro 300s, 67805 moved to Chelmsford during the month, leaving just 67741 and 67750 as the last two at Colchester. Therefore, the number of StreetLites increased, in fact all of the 29 StreetLites allocated to CR worked on 102/103/104 during this period. On 2 August all journeys were worked by StreetLites, they were 47650/56/58/66/97, 63339/44.

Clacton routes. Route 74B has again mostly been worked by long StreetLites during the last month. Exceptions have been double deck Volvos 37007 (22nd), 37042 (5 August), 37054 (15th), 37135 (1 August); short StreetLites 47421 (24th), 47427 (26th), 47650 (18th, but on first journey only, others were run by long StreetLite 63338), 47666 (11th), 47668 (14th), Enviro 300s 67741 (17th), 67750 (10th); Volvo B7RLE 69517 (21st), plus on loan First Eastern Counties StreetDeck 35917 (29th).

Route 76: 37017 (16th), 63338 & 69517 (23rd), 37042, 37138 & 63334 (30th), 47696 & 63336 (6 Aug).

Chelmsford

The disposals of 32482, 32483 and 32484 means the end of the Alexander / Transbus ALX 400 body in the First Essex fleet.

Only two original version Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Urban Eclipses remained in service as this issue went to press, 66806 and 66817. Others remain in use as permanent driver trainers, plus later examples of the type are also still in service at Chelmsford and Colchester.

On the first day of route 170, and 42B renumbered to 370, 23rd: 66817, 67164, 67736, 69431 (first journey), 69434 on 170; 67164 (first journey), 67169, 67736, 69434 on 370. (On Sundays, the 170 is basically short workings of 370 which, from Chelmsford, are diverted to and terminate at Braintree Marks Farm, rather than going through to Halstead.) On the next day, now that route 70 no longer goes under Duke Street bridge, double-deckers were used on the route: 32551, 33994, 33997, 37034, 37047 plus also single-deckers 67164, 67196, 67735.

44914 on 351 (2 August). 69430 an unusual Volvo B7RLE on 35 and 633 (11th), then more usual 67196 on last day of 35 (18th), see pages 28-29 for more on this route. Acquired 33996 on its first day in service on last day of 633 (21st). Same bus an unusual non-Scania (apart from on loan 34432) on X30 (full route) on 1 & 2 August.

Basildon

Although all out of service Volvo 7900 hybrids have now been disposed of, no further ones were taken out of service during Period 4. Six still remain in use, 69905/7/9/15-17.

33412 an unusual double-decker on X10 shorts (10th). 44908 on school route 725 on last day of term (21st).

44909 on 9 (4 August). 63168 (2 August) and 63169 (12th) unusual StreetLites on route X10 (see photo of the latter on the next page).

Now that some Enviro 200 MMCs have transferred to Colchester for route X20, hybrid vehicles have been in use on route X10. 69917 has been a regular (19th, 20th, 28th-3 August, 5 & 6 August) plus also 67901 (28th, 30th, 31st), 69907 (31st), 69909 (18th).

Service Vehicles

A new electric Vauxhall Vivaro minibus for staff shuttles at Chelmsford is FP23 MWU. Eight seats plus driver.

Colchester's similar FG23 XYY is now in full use, as a charging point has now been installed at Quayside depot.

Colchester also has a new electric engineering van, Vauxhall Movano KW23 NLN.

With thanks to Michael Allen, Robert Appleton, Stephen Barham, Ian Dann, David Edwards, John Lidstone, William Morrison, David Moth, Gareth Norris, John Podgorski, Derek Stebbing, Rob Webb, Robert West, Bus Lists on the Web, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

First Essex News in Pictures

An unusual StreetLite on route X10 on 12 July 2023. 63169 (SN64 CJV) in Chelmsford Bus Station.

David Moth



A little piece of 'A Greener Colchester' livery, applied to some Wrightbus bodied B7RLEs, lives on, on the offside corner panel of Gemini B7TL 37010 (WX55 VHV), seen arriving at Harwich on the 1335 from Colchester 104 on 10 July 2023.

Robert Appleton

Compare this with Robert's photo on page 9 of a bus on the same route taken 32 years earlier.



Comparison of Volvo B9TL (left two) & B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini rear ends at Quayside Depot, Colchester on 18 June 2023. Also a comparison of a rear in Essex Bus green and one in 1993 Eastern National green. From left to right 37134 (SN57 HDJ), 37613 (WX58 JXY) and 37007 (WX55 VHR). Not to be outdone, 37134, in Urban 2 livery, has a green front!

David Edwards



One on loan and two acquired Enviro 400 MMCs.

Here is an action shot of on loan 34432 (YX66 WLH), Ensignbus 132, on route X30 on the A130 southbound just prior to the Wickford / South Woodham Ferrers turn off on 15 July 2023.

Nigel Clark

Another photo of this bus is on page 21.



Basildon allocated 33991 (SN65 OGG), acquired from First Glasgow, on route 300 in Duke Street, Chelmsford on 12 July 2023.

Robert Appleton



Chelmsford allocated 33994 (SN65 OGK), also acquired from First Glasgow, on route 372, in Southway, Colchester on 18 July 2023.

John Podgorski



New Route X20

Repainted into Essex Airlink livery, Enviro 200 MMCs 67193 (SN66 WKP) and 67192 (SN66 WKO) at Colchester Bus Station on 24 July 2023, the day after the X20 started.

John G Lidstone



Rear view of the same two buses at Quayside Depot, Colchester on 14 July 2023 showing the different rear graphics.

Ryan Hannah



And here's the other two routes in the Essex Airlink series, although in this case both Enviro 200 MMCs are in Essex Bus green. 67166 (YY66 PBU) on route X10 from Stansted to Basildon passes 67164 (YY66 PBF) waiting to take up a short journey on route X30 from Chelmsford to Rayleigh, in Duke Street, Chelmsford on 25 July 2023.

Robert Appleton



Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus
Eclipse Urban 69155
(MX06 VNL) in
First Midlands & South
Yorkshire driver trainer
livery, just turned off
Westway to enter Westway
depot, Chelmsford on 10
July 2023.

Derek Stebbing

Sister 66886 (MX55 LHL)
is also in this livery, and was
illustrated in EBM's 706 &
710, but has completely
different graphics on the
side.



Enviro 200 44537 (YX13
AEF) outside All Saints
Church, Maldon High Street,
on 25 July 2023 on the
new one journey each way
(M-S) 73B variant of routes
73/A. This serves
Boreham, St Andrew's
Church. This is the morning
journey, 0825 from Cherry
Gardens, Maldon.

Dave Arnold



Rear view of on loan
Ipswich Reds StreetDeck
35917 (BN72 TVL) on
route S2 at Colchester Bus
Station on 25 July 2023.

Adam Kelleher



End of ECC Contracts

The last day of First Essex operating ECC contracts 32 (Chelmsford to Ongar) and 565 (Brentwood Station to Bulphan) was Saturday 29 July. From Monday 31st, they passed to Stephenson's and NIBS respectively. On the 32 this also meant the withdrawal of the commercial extension from Chelmsford Bus Station to Chignal Estate (Trent Road). Enviro 200 44467 (YX12 DHE) is blinded for Trent Road on the last day of FE operation.

Adam Kelleher

Enviro 200 44596 (EU60 LFS), with rather mismatched panels, is seen at Trent Road on the penultimate day of FE operation, 28 July.

Andrew Toms



Midi Enviro 200 44004 (LK57 EIG) on the last day of FE operation of route 565 at Brentwood Station.

Adam Kelleher



Dealer Stock Movements June & July 2023

Vehicles In June 2023

From **Dawsons Rentals**: Scania OmniCity YR59 FZE

From **First Aberdeen**: Volvo B7RLE SV06 GRU

From **First Berkshire**: Volvo 7900 Hybrids BV13 ZCJ, BJ63 UHZ/JW/X

From **First Cymru**: Volvo B7TLs W801 PAE, SF07 FDA

From **First Essex**: Volvo 7900 Hybrid BV13 ZBN. This was fleet number 69908, see page 12.

From **First Glasgow**: Volvo B7TL YN06 URC

From **First Midland Red**: Volvo B7TLs KP54 AZN/KBO

From **First Sheffield**: Volvo B7TL YJ06 XKW, StreetLites SM13 NDJ-L/N/O/U/V/X/Y/NEO, SK63 KGO/V/X/Z, KHC/D/L

From **Preservation, Andover**: JJD 396D (RML2396)

Vehicles Out June 2023

1st Bus Stop, Gravesend: Enviro 400s LK59 DZO/P

Busby, Fruiterers, Stafford: Scania N94 YV03 RBF

Select Bus Services: Optare Versas SV60 CCO/X

Shelton Motors, Ramsey: W801 PAE

PVS, Barnsley: W905 VLN

Ripley, Barnsley: Scania OmniCity double-deckers YT10 UWB/XBZ

Vehicles In July 2023

From **Aintree Coaches, Liverpool**: Transbus Trident SN53 KHZ, Volvo B7RLE SK07 CFP

From **First Essex**: Volvo B7TL AU53 HKB; Volvo 7900 Hybrids BV13 ZBP / ZCE. These were fleet numbers 32484; 69910/19, see page 12.

From **other First Bus companies**: ADL Trident WJ55 CTE; ADL Enviro 200s CU08 ADX/Z; Optare Solos HIG 8433, T14 GWR, MX56 NLJ/K, CN07 KZL; Scania L94UBs LK55 ABZ/ACF; Volvo 7900 Hybrid BV13 ZCK; Volvo B7TLs YJ54 XTX, SF54 TJY/TMO, YJ06 XMF; Wrightbus StreetLites SM13 NEU, SK63 KGP/U/Y/HA/B/O/P

Vehicles Out July 2023

1st Bus Stop, Gravesend: Enviro 400s LK59 DZA/C/D/E/J/N

Aintree Coaches, Liverpool: Enviro 400s LK58 KHE, LK59 DYY

Brylaine: Volvo B7TL YJ06 XLM

Chalkwell, Sittingbourne: Enviro 400s LK58 KHF, LK59 DZB/M

Happy Al's, Liverpool: Scania N230 YT10 XCE/O; StreetLites SK63 KGV/X/KHC/D/E/O/P

Rotala, Birmingham: StreetLites SM13 NDJ/NEO/U, SK63 KGO/P/U/Y/Z/KHA/B

Xquisite, Surrey: Scania OmniCity NK07 GJO

Shelton Motors, Ramsey: Scania N94s YV03 PZX, KX04 RCY; Volvo B7TL HF05 HNB; Volvo 7900 Hybrids BV13 ZBD/U

Hardwick, Barnsley: ADL Trident WJ55 CTE; SF54 TMO, YJ06 XMF

PVS, Barnsley: Optare Solos HIG 8433, MX56 NLJ/K, CN07 KZL; Scania L94UBs LK55 ABZ/ACF; Volvo B7TLs AU53 HKB, SF54 TJY, YJ54 XTX; Volvo 7900 Hybrid BV13 ZCA

Ensignbus Fleet

RML2396 (JJD 396D) has been acquired for the heritage fleet. It has been given Sema number 39396.

A correction to last month, open top Dennis Trident / Plaxton President W905 VLN has not been taken into stock.

As noted above it has gone to PVS, Barnsley.

In mid-July, a problem with London Trams meant that extra buses were running on TfL route 466, including some on loan from Ensignbus, and including a rare appearance in service of dual door red StreetDeck EBS1972 (usually used

for filming purposes). Then in the week commencing 17 July, EBS 1972 was on loan to First Eastern Counties as extra buses were needed for University of East Anglia graduation week shuttles. Open top Trident / ALX400 339 was unusually on route 68 on 26 July and 2 & 6 August.

Right: Ensignbus ran shuttles from Brentwood Station to Kelvedon Hatch for the 'Appetite on the Farm' music festival on 29 July 2023. Vehicles seen (not a complete list) were BCI Excellence 150 and BCI Enterprise 405, 406 & 407. 150 (LX17 GKL) is seen outside Brentwood Station with 405 (LX19 EAW) behind.

Adam Kelleher



Below: As reported last month, from 7 July, Enviro 400 MMC 132 (YX66 WLH) has been on loan to First Essex to cover for Scania 36843 being off road following an RTC. It has received 'Essex Airlink' decals over its Ensignbus fleet names. Its First fleet number is 34432 (not carried on the vehicle). It is seen exiting Chelmsford Bus Station on route X30 to Stansted Airport on 12 July 2023. **Robert Appleton.** See also page 16.



Colchester

The recently acquired Enviro 200, CX08 DJO, has now been renumbered into the Southern Counties series as 4011; initially it ran with its Arriva North West number 2143. The previous 4011 (GN58 BTO) was withdrawn in February and scrapped.

Southend

After last month's optimistic news about the fresh MOT on the Southend Transport liveried Volvo 3816 (GN07 AVC), it failed in service on 24 July and it is believed that it has now been withdrawn, being uneconomic to repair.

Enviro 400 MMC 6504 (SN66 WHX) has been repainted into light blue, the first repaint for seven or eight months.

We have an update on the former Southend Transport Albion Lowlander that went to Canada in 1978 for the Commonwealth Games (326, 7090 HJ, last reported in Paul Bateson's articles in EBNs 607 & 608, November & December 2014). It had become the Wild Thyme Café but a recent Facebook post by the owners has revealed a new use. They explain: "We had the old girl parked down by the ferry terminal on Saturna Island and operated as a coffee shop for about six years. My husband and I decided to start a family, so we closed down the cafe, towed it to our property and renovated it". It's now converted to a holiday home, still named 'Lucy', and will be open for bookings from August. The café business had closed in 2019 and in December that year the bus was moved to its new location, still in the Gulf Islands Park Reserve, for the extensive conversion work to take place.

Opposite: Your holiday hideaway in the woods! Former Southend Transport 326 on Saturna Island with the top deck now converted to a lounge and bedroom. Photos from the owners' Facebook page, more are available at www.facebook.com/wildthymehideaway.

Harlow

Further to last month, StreetLite 2310 (GN14 DXW) was new to Arriva Kent Thameside but moved to Luton last summer to replace an accident damaged example. It is reported to be the first SL to operate at Harlow since July 2020. It is in old aquamarine / cream livery. However, it turned out to only be on loan, from c4-11 July, and was back in service at Luton on 19th.

Optare Solo M810 Slimline 2482 (YJ07 VRF) went to Ware at lunchtime on 26 July, swapped for larger Solo M950 2484 (YK07 BEO). Both are in aquamarine / cream.

VDL SB200 / Plaxton Centro 3813 (YJ58 CCF) is a recent transfer from Arriva Beds & Bucks to Herts & Essex. It was seen in Harlow depot on 21 July 2023, but has not been used here, instead at Ware and Stevenage.

The bus station enquiry office is closed for all of August.

With thanks to John Card, Matthew Evans, Tony Higgs, Adam Kelleher, John Lidstone, Keith Sadler and LOTS.

Right: A rare photo. In EBM 703 we reported that Enviro 400 MMC 6501 (SN66 WHU) had been repainted but had then moved to Tunbridge Wells. Here it is in its brief stay in Southend in new livery, at London Road, Leigh on 16 October 2022.

John G Lidstone





Significant Allocations

573 KN to CN by 11 July, returned by 21 July.
823 SY to KN by 21 July
911 HD to CN by 10 July

Fleet News

The brief allocation of veteran Plaxton President bodied Volvo B7TL 573 (W491 WGH) to Clacton saw the bus undertake intensive duties on a service 76/74/63/76 diagram from 6am to 7pm. Seen on these routes from 13 July until 19 July, by 21 July it had reverted to the relevant calm of one 95A and one PL4 School duty in one day. Long term out of use in July were 255 (EU05 AUT), 267 (AJ58 PZS) (which had failed in service several times before this), 520 (LX05 EZC), 524 (LX05 EZG), 532 (LX59 DCO), 602 (SN10 CFF) and Chambers 877 (PN09 ENO). On Monday 10 July, 823 (YN56 FFC) worked D1 Maldon routes, then Tuesday 18 July worked 751 and 750 Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury routes before returning on 21 July to operate Colchester Thomas Lord Audley School routes - example of the sporadic and varied geographical use of 821 and 823 long wheelbase Scania Omnidekkas. 822 still has not been available for service as yet. Both ex-Chambers Mercedes Touro Coaches 1 (BX55 FYH) and 2 (BX55 FYJ) are reportedly currently not in service, with 2 being at Dereham.

Service News

Hedingham have registered the Clacton Airshow Park & Ride service on 24 & 25 August 2023 to run direct, with no intermediate stops between Clacton Shopping Village Car Park and the seafront. Enviro 200 264 (EU59 AYP) operated Hedingham's last D2 service to Southminster on Saturday 29 July 2023. Unfortunately, the last D1 to Bradwell was cancelled. From Monday 31st, the ECC contract for these routes passed to Stephensons.

Other News

Ex Hedingham L414 (W834 NNJ), a Dennis Trident / East Lancs, new to Brighton & Hove, was featured on BBC Look East on Wednesday 19 July, after three years of internal reconstruction to create a school library at the Mayflower Primary School in Dovercourt. The bus is housed within a walled quadrangle at the school. The bus has been painted externally by a local artist, with nautical themes not dissimilar to the Hedingham open tops of the past few years, as shown **right**.

Mayflower Primary School

A photo of L414 being lifted by crane into place over the school on Christmas Eve 2020 was on the front cover of EBN 681.

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



Acquired Vehicle

An addition for Stephenson's is ADL Enviro 200 8.9m 428 (YX17 NYW), B29F.

Acquired from Mistal Group where it had been in their rental fleet. It has operated for Claribels Coaches, Marchants of Cheltenham, Kev's of Bromsgrove and Tamar Coaches of Plymouth.

Services

Following the comments about Thurrock tendered services (EBMs 706 & 708), notice has now been given by the Council to terminate these contracts, due to budgetary pressures. Therefore services 11 & 374 (NIBS) and 265 (Stephenson's) will cease after 2 September.

Re the new ECC contracts from 31 July, D1/D2 are worked from Maldon depot; 5, 7/A, 14, 32 from Boreham and 306 from Haverhill. Enviro 200s 431 (25th) and 466 (28th) were seen on route learning in Harlow earlier in July. A few first day observations: Stephenson's - Solos 324 on D1 & 326 on D2, mini Enviro 200 427 (YY15 NJO) on 32 (as seen **above** in Ongar, **Robert Downton**); NIBS - 632 on 565.



With thanks to Dave Arnold, Dale Bell, John Card, Robert Downton, John Podgorski, Chris Stewart and the companies.

Below: Scania N250UD / ADL Enviro 400 MMC 621 (EU23 BZL) was presented at the Guildhall in London at the annual Cart Marking ceremony on 22 July 2023. The blinds were specially programmed for the occasion. Just to the left of the door is the wooden plate affixed specially for the mark to be branded onto it. **Terry Torch**
This follows the Cart Mark bestowed on the company's preserved Ford Transit minibus in 2019, as reported in EBN 664 (August 2019) page 24.



Disposals

Former Klarners of Colchester Scania L94UB / Wrightbus Solar YN05 WKE has been sold to Aaron's of Wick. It left on 8 July 2023. Its last day of operation was on 3 July on emergency rail replacement, as seen **right** at Ipswich Railway Station.

Adam Barham. This vehicle has previously been illustrated in EBN/MS 681, 683 & 691.

Mercedes-Benz 311CDI / Koch AB03 PAN (NX04 ZKT) exported to Mozambique July 2023.

Volvo B12B / Plaxton VB08 PAN (SV08 GXP) to Fishers Tours, Dundee August 2023.



Other News

Further to EBM 707, Don's Coaches, Great Dunmow is no longer used to outstation a minibus (thought to have ceased at the end of the Spring 2023 school term).

With thanks to Adam Barham and John Podgorski.

Other Operators

Roger A Smith

Don's of Dunmow

MX55 XGM, an ADL Enviro 300, B62F, is here from Trent, Great Finborough, Suffolk.

Kings Coaches, Stanway, Colchester

On 11 July 2023, Kings Coaches took delivery of a Mercedes-Benz Tourismo from Evobus (UK) Ltd, Coventry, KC70 ABC, C53Ft, in a special 70th anniversary livery. See photo on page 30. In exchange, VDL Futura, KC15 ABC departed to Evobus. Not previously reported, on 4 May 2022, Mercedes-Benz Tourismo KC22 ABC, C53Ft, was also delivered from Evobus, with MAN / Van Hool, KC14 ABC travelling the other way. The latter then moved on to AA Jewitt & Sons of Chollerford.

Minicab Services (TG Coaches), Colchester

Plaxton CH72/3FT bodied Volvo B11R(T) TO63 OXF, is here from Llew Jones, Llanrwst, North Wales.

Tendring Travel, Thorpe-le-Soken

LW05 VKV, an Alexander Dennis H49/27F Volvo B7TL is here. Formerly with Keane Travel, Orsett, this vehicle was originally registered as O5-D-10431 in the Republic of Ireland. Also recently arrived here is PO61 BGZ, an Irisbus B66F, ex Hartlepool Council.

Other

Former London United Scania N230UD / Scania SP111 / SP40111 (YR59 FYS) was acquired by the Salvation Army from Ensignbus in March this year (see EBM 708). It is for conversion to a mobile 'Social Supermarket' on Canvey Island. It is currently at South East Coach Works being fitted out. More information at: www.echonews.co.uk/news/23684311.canvey-welcome-new-mobile-community-supermarket.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy, Peter Mobbs and the PSV Circle.

The summer of 1993 saw the end of an era, with the sale of Southend Transport.

The erstwhile Southend (Corporation) Transport undertaking had been run as a stand-alone company since deregulation in October 1986 but was still owned by the Council. However, following a damaging 'bus war' with Thamesway, Southend Transport's finances were in a poor state and the Council saw no option but to sell to a stronger company that could support the business. So on 24 June 1993, Southend Transport was sold to the fledgling British Bus Group, which in turn was acquired by Cowie plc in 1996 and renamed as Arriva in 1997.

The story of Southend's fortunes from 1986 onwards was covered in detail in two articles I wrote for 'Buses' magazine at the turn of the millennium (July and August 1999 editions) and we don't have space here to debate the issues that led to the sale, which is complicated by the rise and fall of the London express service X1 and its derivatives - the subject of a book I'm working on at present. Southend's fleet had been massively expanded as the bus war progressed, rising from 84 (65 buses and 19 coaches) in September 1990 to an unsustainable 129 (112 buses and 17 coaches) at the time of the sale. Following the sale and the outbreak of peace, the fleet settled down to a more realistic mid-90s, of which 17/18 were coaches. By way of comparison, today Arriva Southend operates 56 buses, with coaching operations long since ceased.

So what was the fleet that British Bus acquired?

20	AEC Routemaster	102-13/5-8/20-3
31	Daimler/Leyland Fleetline	208/11/2/6/21-42/50-4
2	Daimler Fleetline open top	914/5
13	Leyland Olympian	256-60/2-5/81-4
17	Bristol VR	301-7/9/51-3/81/2, 401-4
29	Leyland National	703/5-18/21-3/5/6/45/51/81-7
17	Leyland Tiger coaches	546-51/3-9/61-4

The Routemasters were to go by the end of the year, as we'll mark in our December issue. And further north in the county, Colchester Borough Transport was similarly to join the British Bus Group in November 1993. Meanwhile, here's a reminder of the most numerous type in the ST fleet in 1993 - Daimler Fleetline / Northern Counties 212 (JTD 392P), which had been new in 1976 as 392. It's at the White Horse, Southchurch on 22 August 1991. It was withdrawn in 1999 and initially preserved but was last reported in the USA in 2004. **Richard Delahoy**



Go West Young Man

Richard Delahoy

One of the most obscure recent First Essex routes is - or rather, was - the 35, a Tuesday school day only single journey from the fringes of London to the heart of Essex. Read on . . .

The 35, which ran for the last time on 18 July, was built around a school contract service that First Essex have operated since September 2020, the 633 (numbered S33 until October last year), from Ongar, via Passingford Bridge, Abridge, Grange Hill and Chigwell to Debden Park High School (not surprisingly, in Debden, on the Central Line and close to the Greater London boundary). Worked by Chelmsford depot, this contract involved some long dead runs so the idea came about of using it one day a week to run a shoppers' service, hence on Tuesdays it left Debden at 0840 (too early for ENCTS pass holders, did that not occur to someone?) via Epping and North Weald. ENCTS passes became valid from Epping Church onwards. The 35 then did a fast sprint along the A414 direct to Chelmsford, arriving in the city at 0950 to allow three and a half hours of shopping. From April to September 2022, it took a more indirect route after Ongar, via Kelvedon Hatch, Wyatts Green and Mountnessing, presumably in an attempt to widen the catchment area and increase patronage (but slightly reducing the time in Chelmsford); from last September the route had reverted to its original version. Both services (35 & 633) have now ceased as First Essex did not win the school contract back at retender.

To sample the 35, I rode back from Chelmsford on the penultimate day of operation, 11 July (I couldn't do the very last day as I was leading a walk across north London for my railway club that day, looking at the part of the lost 'Northern Heights' tube extension - but that's a story for a different forum). Unusually for a service starting in the city centre, the 35 didn't serve the bus station but instead started at the rather dismal stop under the retail market multi-storey car park and then proceeded via Tindal Street and New London Road and out of Chelmsford. Waiting at the first stop, I wasn't sure what to expect and wondered if I might be the only passenger? Wrong. Eleven ladies of pensionable age boarded, plus me and one other (I'll return to him later). Our bus was 69430 (AU58 FFS), a Wrightbus bodied Volvo B7RLE. Such an elderly bus was unusual, the route is often run by newer ex Park & Ride Enviro 200 MMCs, and in particular 67196 has been a regular performer, still in black P&R livery (and indeed operated on the final day of the 35, 18th). Departure time was 1320 for a one hour and six minute timetabled journey.

Photography at the Retail Market stop is not easy (except for buses as they leave, not an option open to me on boarding there), with varied lighting and difficult reflections, but here is 69430 approaching the stop, clearly displaying its distant destination. Interestingly, the blind display had clearly not been updated for the September 2022 revision, as it still shows 'Kelvedon Hatch', a point no longer served.



It transpired that ten of the eleven ladies were friends and carried on a very lively chatter for almost the whole journey, comparing purchases and so on. One's shopping bag fell over, scattering potatoes all over the floor towards the front of the bus. I went to pick them up (being, I thought, perhaps a slightly younger and nimbler pensioner) and was rewarded with a round of applause for my chivalrous efforts!

The bus follows the most direct route away from Chelmsford, so up New London Road to the Miami (Tesco) roundabout, then right onto the A1114 and right again onto the A414 for the start of a fast, non-stop run of 16 miles before turning off into North Weald. What was surprising was to be hailed at the one stop in common with the 351, at Widford, by a man going to an obscure stop somewhere around Norton Heath - a journey impossible on any other bus service. I guess he knew it was a once a week service rather than he was just waiting on the off chance!

Arriving in North Weald, seven of our ladies alighted, followed by three more in Epping and the final one at the very end of the route in Debden Broadway. But what of the other passenger mentioned earlier? Like me, he stayed on for the complete journey and it turned out that he was a young enthusiast and I guess he'd come to experience the full throttle thrash along the A414 in our elderly Volvo, although I suspect that any attempts he may have made to video the ride were somewhat frustrated by the volume of the ladies on the bus! A 'chatty bus' indeed. Like me, he photographed the bus on arrival in Debden but then rushed away so I never got the chance to say hello.

I hung around in Debden to see the return school working and hoping to ride on the Central Connect 542/A local service, another Essex CC contract. Those routes had replaced the Loughton to Debden section of Arriva 87 at the end of 2020. I just missed the Central Connect bus on the first passing (well, I was in Greggs getting a tea) and then spotted it some while later passing the end of the road, but after a further 30 plus minute wait, no bus came (the routes have a combined 30-minute headway). The tracking later showed that the bus - Enviro 200 1420 (MX12 DZE, still in full CT Plus white livery) - had returned to Harlow to work the 14 service there, but no replacement bus appeared in Debden or Loughton before I gave up in disgust, nor could I see one anywhere on the tracking. My route home was then by TfL service 20 to Loughton, tube to Leytonstone, walk to the Overground station (High Road), train to Barking and onwards to Southend.

The 35 and 633 took First Essex buses further west than any other services and close to TfL land. So in that sense, another (short term) era ends. And the final question - why choose the number 35 for that shopper bus? At the time of its introduction, 31 series was Chelmsford to Maldon / Burnham, 32 Chelmsford to Ongar, 33 had been used for a Sunday variation of the 31 (running Southminster to Broomfield Hospital) although I can't recall when that route ceased - it was definitely after August 2019, 36 Chelmsford to South Woodham and 37 a Brentwood local. There wasn't a 34 or 35 so I guess that First Essex just chose one of these two spare numbers. The school contract had been numbered 133 by the previous contractor, Swallow Coaches, so S33/633 were logical numbers for it.

The 633 is a closed-door school contract, not open to the public, so can display 'School Bus' rather than a route number. 69430 is seen in Debden Broadway, having just left the school on its 55-minute run to Ongar. It then went on to work the 1725 service 71 to Witham. Both photos **Richard Delahoy**



Mercedes-Benz Tourismos



Above: Anitas AC16 ERN, new to them in March 2016, at Bath House Meadow Coach Park, Walton-on-the-Naze on 12 July 2023. **Robert Appleton**

Below: Kings Tours KC70 ABC at Madingley Park & Ride, Cambridge on 16 July 2023, having dropped off Italian students from the University of Essex. **Peter Mobbs.** See page 26.





Adam Carter, who now owns the fantastically restored H C Chambers & Sons Leyland Olympian Alexander RL G864 XDX, as featured on the front cover of EBM 710, kindly invited myself and my son Tom to meet him and guests at a lunch stop on the H C Chambers & Son tour from Bury St Edmunds to Bures return on Sunday 2 July 2023. This article aims to give an insight into the history of the bus and the route to preservation, plus the future ambitions of Adam in continued preservation and improvements back to the original condition.

Above: G864 XDX outside the old Chambers depot in Bures. **Tom Lloyd.** All photos 2 July 2023.

G864 XDX was the third of a trio of stock Leyland Olympians with Cummins L10 engines, bodied by Alexander, with their lowbridge version of their very attractive RL bodywork. It was new in 1989, following sisters F243 RRT and G760 VRT into service. Alexander's Falkirk based coachbuilder bodied chassis for dealership sales. Among larger groups to take the type were Alder Valley South, London Buslines, Armchair, Luton & District and Yorkshire Rider, with independents having smaller numbers including Stevenson's of Uttoxeter and the A1 group, Scotland. Local operators to purchase from the batches of stock were Hedingham Omnibuses and Southend Transport, along with the Chambers three which were purchased from Arlington Motors in Enfield (this was long before Hedingham and Chambers became related to each other).

Local chassis and body information

F243 RRT	ON10979	Alexander 1788/2	H C Chambers
G760 VRT	ON11059	Alexander 2288/1	H C Chambers
G864 XDX	ON11188	Alexander 4188/2	H C Chambers
F261 RHJ	ON11072	Alexander 2288/2	Southend Transport
H160 HJN	ON10983	Alexander 1788/6	Hedingham Omnibuses

Adam has owned the Olympian since September 2022. The history of the bus is reasonably straightforward, Chambers owning from new until 2006 when they sold it to the Ensignbus dealership. From here Ensignbus sold it

on to Helms Coaches, Ellesmere Port. In 2009 it moved on to Johnson Bros Tours of Worksop, in their famous blue / yellow fleet, latterly becoming resident in the school bus contract fleet. Johnsons Bros, previous prolific users of Bristol VRT / ECWs, had taken a long time to convert to Olympians and the closed contract nature of some of their business saved G864 XDX from withdrawal until 2022 when many OmniDekkas arrived. Adam was always a Chambers fan and had always wanted to own a Chambers bus and the opportunity arose to purchase the vehicle in very good running order with very little mechanical work and no body panelling work being needed. Adam has had the paintwork completely restored to the original diagonal red and cream striped livery with sign written fleet names. It has been suggested that the diagonal striped livery did not last after these three vehicles in the fleet because the paint repairs were complex and expensive, hence the change to a solid single colour for subsequent new deliveries which began with N952 KBJ, a Volvo Olympian / Northern Counties.

G864 XDX was totally repainted by haulage company Shirley's Transport of Stoke-on-Trent and the signwriting was completed by Signtrade of Bedford. The bus certainly looks immaculate and is a credit to the workmanship of these companies and to Adam's determination to succeed in the restoration to original condition. To that end, Adam plans to have the seats re-trimmed eventually into the original red diamond type of moquette, the seats are currently mainly of Stagecoach corporate style. Other plans are to restore the headlight and indicator bezels, although these are now quite rare to find, and also paint the external mirror frames black.

A great find during restoration was an original 1997 Chambers blind and this has been restored along with the full three number track numerical blinds, perfectly set on the day for the short working to Bures on 753, basically returning home! Internally the vehicle is very tidy and clean, with small signs of ex Chambers colours, but there have been slight wall composite changes over the years presumably to hide daily wear and tear. Adam wishes to source or create period adverts and route advertising / information for the inside. Currently there is no ticket machine fitted, but Adam was presented with a Setright H C Chambers ticket machine whilst at the Eight Bells lunch stop during the tour.

There was debate from Adam himself over the final red used as to whether the red and cream should be slightly deeper shades, however the photo shoot and comparison to a 1995 photo of an original Alexander decker outside the depot was replicated and the difference is marginal if any, and minds can play tricks over 30 years. It is unbelievable that the vehicle is 34 years old both in looks and performance.

The lunch included 18 guests overall and was very enjoyable with a mix of Adam's family, friends and Chambers fan representatives and ex-employees in attendance.

The bus made its rally debut at Dereham Mid-Norfolk Railway bus day on 14 May 2023 and has also attended the Fenland Bus Festival (as per the EBM front cover photo) and operated free rides around its old stomping ground from the East Anglian Railway Museum's Transport Extravaganza weekend in late May.

G864 XDX makes a welcome addition to the fleet of local operator preserved vehicles and reminds us of the colours and sounds of the independent operators that previously operated in North Essex and especially into Colchester. It is believed that F243 RRT still exists in Thetford Forest as a Paintball attraction but the whereabouts and fate of G706 VRT are unknown.

I would like to thank Adam very much for inviting Tom & I to the event, welcoming us into the lunch group and taking time out to give us some insight into his future plans. It was widely commented by the group and by passers-by how good it was to see an original Chambers bus back in Bures.

Inside Rear Cover

Top: On the Suffolk side of Bures, just approaching the old depot in the High Street heading towards Colchester.

Mark Lloyd

Bottom: The current owner Adam Carter and former owner and director of Chambers Alec Chambers. On the Essex side of the river adjacent to the village green in front of the Eight Bells Pub at the junction of Bridge Street and Colchester Road, the B1508. **Jane Chambers**

Rear Cover

Top: Having backed into the former depot yard at Bures.

Bottom: Having travelled over the River Stour in Bridge Street, Bures, heading towards Sudbury, now in Suffolk having left Essex. Both **Tom Lloyd**





ESSEX BUS MAGAZINE Issue 712 August 2023

Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964