

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 709 May 2023



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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VISIT
**CORONATION
LONDON**

SUMMER TIME TABLES 1953
INCLUDING SPECIAL LATE
RETURN JOURNEYS FROM
LONDON DURING
CORONATION PERIOD
BY

EASTERN NATIONAL

WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA
COACH SERVICES





The Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla was held on 6 May 2023, a couple of days before this issue of EBM went to press.

Above: Arriva Southend Enviro 400 MMC 6515 (SN66 WJM), in a livery for celebrating Southend's city status and in tribute to Sir David Amess MP, in Southend Travel Centre on 4 May, with a blind to celebrate the King's Coronation two days later. **Below:** close-up of the blind. **Gareth Jones**

Inside Front Cover: The front of a special four-side leaflet produced for coach services going into London, featuring express services A-D and bus routes 10, 251 & 322, for the Coronation of the King's mother, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 70 years ago.

Front Cover: An Eastern National Heritage bus display was held at the Langford Museum of Power on Coronation Bank Holiday Monday, 8 May. Looking absolutely immaculate was Craig Mara's Bristol L6B coach with ECW full-front bodywork, PTW 110 (4107 / 328), new in 1950, withdrawn in 1963 and in preservation since 1973.

Richard Delahoy. A couple more photos from the event are on page 31.



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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
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£2.30 per month. For example, a member joining in
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EBM Extra

EBM is published monthly. In addition, we aim to
publish two Extras each year full of historical features.
These are supplied to members free of charge, subject
to funding.

Membership Records & Data Protection

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

Reports, Articles & Photographs

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

Target Dates for EBM 710

Reports to Sub-Editors	27 May
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	2 June
Dispatch by Printers on or before	10 June

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent
up to 3rd 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
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Group Notices

Membership News

Welcome to new members:

Ryan Hannah, Colchester - 1214

Debbie Sharp, Tiptree - 1215.

Annual General Meeting

An update to last month's report.

After a COVID enforced absence, we are pleased to be able to announce the return of our Annual General Meeting. Following feedback, it has been moved to an afternoon slot and will be held at The Quaker Meeting House, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2QL on Wednesday 12 July, commencing at 1400. 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 & Rail Stations. Please note, there is no parking available at the venue (apart from for blue badge holders).

This is an opportunity for you to come along and ask questions, or make suggestions to the committee, regarding how you would like to see the Group run. There will also be brief reports on how the Group is performing.

Please note, there will not be the usual slide show after the AGM.

If you are unable to attend, but would like to ask anything, please submit by e-mail to ianransom2008@gmail.com, or by post to 34 Donald Way, Chelmsford, CM2 9JE.

The current committee are willing to stand for a further year. However, this is not an automatic process, so if you would like to stand, please contact Ian Ransom (as above).

The Running Card

by Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Sunday 14 May: Bus Day, Mid Norfolk Railway, Dereham Station.

Sunday 21 May: Harlow Classic Bus Running Day.

Sunday 21 May: Open Day at Canvey Bus Museum.

Sunday 21 May: Fenland Bus Festival, Whittlesey. Free 30 mins bus service from Peterborough to the site, and services to the Classic Car Show at Ramsey, also Yaxley, Turvey, Thorley and March.

Saturday 27 May: Theydon Bois Transport Bazaar. Village Hall CM16 7ER.

Sunday 11 June: Bromley Pageant of Motoring, Norman Park Bromley.

Sunday 18 June: Fathers' Day event at Canvey Transport Museum.

Sunday 18 June: Showbus Flyby Brunel University, Uxbridge to High Wycombe.

Sunday 25 June: Summer on the Buses. London Bus Museum, Brooklands, Surrey.

Saturday / Sunday 1/2 July: Vintage Transport Weekend North Norfolk Railway. Free bus service Sheringham - Holt, where there will be a static display of classic vehicles.

Sunday 2 July: Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum Open Day. North Hykham.

Saturday 8 July: Omnibus Society Special London Meeting to mark 90 years since the creation of London Transport "How and why did London's Transport become London Transport". Talk by Dr. James Fowler, University of Essex. Venue is The Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3BU, start time 1400 for 1430. All EBEG Members are welcome to attend. This talk is dedicated to the memory of the late John Taylor, a long-standing OS & EBEG member and is funded by a legacy he left to the OS.

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

For Sale

Group publications now half price:

Essex Buses Fleet Record Volume 3 (Eastern National and Thamesway Reunited, 1996-2004) £7 plus £2 P&P.

Eastern National and Thamesway in London - Tendered Services £6 plus £2 P&P.

14 photos 6x4 colour of Southend New Year Running Day 2009 - £3 plus £1 P&P.

11 photos of 6x4 colour Southend New Year Running Day 2010 - £2.20 plus £1 P&P.

Send e-mail to Sales Officer, address on page 2.

Follow Ups to Previous Issues

DigiGo Update

This commenced on 28 March 2022, as reported in EBM 696 (April 2022). On 5 September the registration was amended from two separate areas to one combined area (EBM 701). On 22 September the operating area was expanded to include Great Dunmow, Stebbing, Great Sailing and Great Canfield (EBM 702). In its first year of operation, this fully electric shared public transport service which offers on-demand or pre-bookable travel, carried over 11,600 passengers. Not previously reported is that two of the electric minibuses used are LDV V80 minibuses LV71 AEK and LV71 AEN. With thanks to the Essex Chronicle.

50th Anniversary of Eastern National Leyland Nationals

The middle photo on page 29 of EBM 705 showed 1704 (WNO 553L) and 1705 (WNO 554L) on 8 February 1973 at Central Works, Chelmsford, taken soon after delivery. Both have chrome bumpers but do not have white bands. We thought that these early LNs received white bands and had their bumpers painted white before entering service. However, **David Edwards** has found a photo in his collection (photographer unknown) of 1705, presumably taken soon after it entered service, on route 53, with a white band added after delivery, but with the front bumper at least (rear not visible) still chrome.

David writes: "The location is Colchester High Street, top end approaching the Town Hall, just visible with scaffolding against it. The building site is the site of the recently demolished magnificent Cups Hotel, a glorious building that should never have been allowed to fall into such a state of disrepair that demolition was deemed to be the only option for it. It was replaced by a modern 1970s style concrete block that is still there and at one time housed the Job Centre and now is a collection of fast food restaurants. The point 1705 is passing on the nearside is now the site of the bus stop for the Park & Ride service & route S2 to Stanway. Not only does 1705 still have original chrome bumpers but it also has the original style 'Raydot' mirrors and arms (with the nearside arm extended forward so viewed through the windscreen not the doors). These didn't last very long before being replaced by Eastern National's standard style of mirror with different brackets and ball joint fixings." See page 32 for a recent photo taken just slightly further down the High Street which shows the completed new building.



Book Review: 'A London Busman's Career, 1946-1972'

Peter Carr writes: "Interesting little piece on the late days of Epping garage and the early days of Harlow garage as part of the book review in EBM 708. Appertaining to this, readers might well be interested to see the photo (right) of the sign outside the garage under construction in 1962. The negative from which I took a print was lent to me by my former Eastern National colleague **Paul Stavrou** in the 1970s. As he was only 8 years old in 1962 it was probably taken by a family member. I'm sure Paul would be happy for it to be shown in EBM.

"The review stated that an early turn on LT / LCBS 339 had the meal break taken at Eastern National's Brentwood depot; conversely, there was one Eastern National duty from Bishop's Stortford garage on route 59 that scheduled the meal break to be taken at LCBS's Harlow garage."



709 for EBM 709

Thamesway Dennis Dart SLF / Plaxton Pointer **709** (P709HPU) B37F, new in 1996, on route 22 at Basildon Bus Station, surrounded by other Darts, including one on the right branded for 'Premier 100', with a Mercedes minibus behind, on 13 August 1998. The large 'Thamesway' fleet name on the front has been removed and replaced by a 'First' one, but the ghosting of the former can still be seen. **Robert Appleton**



16 April 2023

2/3 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station Circular via Staple Tye **Arriva**. To clarify the note last month, the Saturday service is half-hourly on each route, to give a combined 15 minute frequency.

17 April

827 (Sch only) Canvey Leigh Beck - Southend Travel Centre **First Essex**. Revised timetable for reliability.

2 May

Polly Field 2 (Tu Only) Braintree Polly Field - Braintree Village **Braintree Community Transport**. New service. 1000 from Polly Field and 1200 from Braintree Village.

6 May

Hospital Hopper (Daily) Clacton - Colchester, The Oaks Hospital **Tendring Community Transport**. Revised timetable.

7 May

Z2 (Daily) Canning Town Station - Tilbury Amazon **First Bus** (operated by **Ensignbus**). Revised timetable on this closed contract.

7 June

7 (M-S) Southend Travel Centre - Rayleigh Station **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.

Although it has been reported elsewhere that Thurrock Council would withdraw funding for contract services 11 (Purfleet - Basildon), 265 (Grays - Bulphan) and 374 (Grays - Basildon) due to a £184m gap in its finances, the decision has been called in for further debate and these services are still operating and no changes have been registered by **NIBS**.

Publicity Items

Vectare eight-page booklet for Chelmsford Park & Ride services dated 3 January 2023.

The latest of the excellent timetable books from Ensignbus was published on 1 April 2023. 36 pages with timetables for all Thurrock area services and a network map.

Coronation Services

Most companies operated normal Saturday and Sunday services over the Coronation weekend (6-7 May) with Sunday services on Bank Holiday Monday 8th. **Below:** First Bus publicity on Twitter.



Acquired Vehicles

63370	SL16 RAX	SA9DSRXXX16141269	AM736	B41F	05/16	First South Yorkshire
63372	SL16 RBO	SA9DSRXXX16141271	AM738	B41F	05/16	First South Yorkshire
63375	SL16 RBX	SA9DSRXXX16141274	AM741	B41F	05/16	First South Yorkshire

Wrightbus StreetLite Max DF. Collected from Hoeford Depot, First Hampshire & Dorset, on 6 May 2023, driven to Basildon Depot. In Urban livery with 'Solent' main fleet names on cove panels.

Like 63312, 63373, 63381 and 63383 listed last month (which are currently still in store at Purfleet), these acquisitions are as an indirect result of the closure of Southampton depot in February; they were made surplus at Hoeford by double-deckers transferred from Southampton. They transferred to FH&D in August 2019.

There is a link between these three StreetLites, the three originating in First South Yorkshire reported last month (63373/81/83) and the four at Colchester reported in EBM 707 (47665-6/8-9). When 47665-6/8-9 moved from the First Portsmouth, Fareham & Gosport division of First Hampshire & Dorset to the First Southampton division in summer 2019 for the new City Red route 1 (as reported in EBM 707) these 63-series vehicles were acquired by the FP,F&G division from FSU to replace them.

The last of the StreetLites from Southampton to enter service, 47608, did so after repaint, on route C2 on 22 April.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 1 2023/24 (26 March - 22 April)

32526 CR-CR (oos), 33504 BN-BN (oos), 33685 HH (oos)-HH, 37613 CR-CR (oos), 42941 CF-CF (oos), 42944 CF-CF (oos), 47608 CF (oos)-CF, 47649 HH-BN, 63167 HH-BN, 63461 HH (oos)-HH, 63465 HH (oos)-HH, 66760 CF (oos)-Disposal, 66794 CF (oos)-Disposal, 66797 CF (oos)-Disposal, 66813 CF (oos)-Disposal, 66818 CF-CF (oos), 66823 CF-CF (oos), 66825 CF(DS)-Disposal, 67161 BN-BN (oos), 67166 BN-BN (oos), 69901 BN-BN (oos), 69902 BN-CR (oos), 69903 BN (oos)-CR (oos), 69904 BN-BN (oos), 69906 BN (oos)-CR (oos), 69911 BN (oos)-CR (oos)

69901/2/4 into long term reserve.

Disposals

66794, 66797 and 66813 as in EBM 708.

42934 and 64017 to PVS Barnsley, c 27 April 2023.

42944, 66760 (April 2023), 42930, 66818, 66823 (May) to Ensignbus, then all on to Shelton Motors (in practice, most if not all, likely to have gone direct to Shelton Motors).

66825 (driver trainer) to First Eastern Counties, seen on training duties in Norwich on 11 April 2023.

Repaints

44460 seen repainted to red shuttles livery at Mardens 28 April, back in service on 2 May.

47599 to red shuttles livery at Mardens, back in service on 26 April. Unfortunately, this has lost its chrome surrounds to its front 'W'.

47602 to red shuttles livery at Mardens, back in service on 13 April.

47608 to red shuttles livery (before entering service) at Mardens, in service on 22 April.

Re-seated Vehicles

Blue Airlink liveried 67161 was driven to Alexander Dennis Ltd at Harlow on 19 April, with black ex Park & Ride liveried 67194 following a week or so later. The former is having its luggage racks removed and being up seated and repainted into red shuttles livery. The latter will have luggage racks fitted and be painted into blue Airlink livery. 67163 (Airlink livery), 67167 and 67168 (both Urban livery) will follow and have the same treatment as 67161.

67195, 67196 and 67197 (all in black livery) will have the same treatment as 67194. The reason for these changes are that the ex P&R vehicles have 6 cylinder engines rather than 4, and they also have air conditioning, so are better suited to route X10.

Services

Since the service changes of 16 April, routes 22 (Basildon-Carvey) and 28 (Basildon-Southend) are no longer interworked, after a long period of being so. Now that the 22 has been diverted to replace the withdrawn B5, Basildon depot now has a share of route 22 as well as Hadleigh. This has allowed hybrid vehicle operation to reach Carvey Island for the first time with some appearances by Volvo 7900Hs and Enviro 350Hs. Early examples of the former were 69905 (20 April), 69907 (18th, 22nd), 69909 (17th), 69917 (22nd) & 69919 (18th) and of the latter 67902 & 67903 (22nd).

The previous 71 journeys that since 16 April have been replaced by X71s continue to be operated by single-deckers and go under Duke Street bridge. The 0920 journey from Colchester is operated by a double-decker (from Chelmsford depot) and so uses the previous X71 route.

First Essex v First Cymru

Further to the article 'A Tribute to First Essex's Dart SLFs' in EBM 704, at the start of April 2023 there were only two Darts in service with First Bus, First Essex's 42935 (SN05 DZR) and First Cymru's 42612 (CU54 HYZ). These were both still in service at the start of May, so the battle continues to see which company operates the last Dart. (This does not include Enviro 200 bodies on Dart chassis, which are normally classified as Enviro 200s rather than Darts.)

There was another battle between Essex and Cymru, that of getting the last First Bus Wrightbus StreetLite, and also the last First diesel engined bus for normal passenger service, into service (it is believed 15 StreetDecks are on order for Somerset Passenger Solutions for workers transport). Essex lost this one. Numerically, FE 63454-63464 are the last StreetLites for First Bus, however, First Cymru received immediately previous numbers 63444-63453 around the same time, but these have 23-registrations, as opposed to the 72-registrations of the Essex examples. 63349 was the last of all, delivered to Lawrence Hill, Bristol on 3 April, on its way to Swansea. Incidentally, the Cymru examples are in standard corporate colour version of Urban 2 livery.

Around the Depots

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

First Bus is to invest £2.5 million in installing more than 6,000 solar panels across 20 of its depots across the UK as part of its net-zero strategy. The solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, which will be in place by mid-June 2023, will generate more than 2 million kWh per year, enough to power 700 family homes. The move forms part of First Bus's ambitions to carry out its operations with net-zero emissions by 2050 or earlier. The panels would not only reduce costs but enable the 20 sites to generate their own renewable power for lighting, heating, office equipment and engineering bays without drawing power from the national grid. Among the 20 depots are two First Essex ones, Westway at Chelmsford and Quayside at Colchester, plus fellow First East of England depots at Great Yarmouth and Roundtree Way, Norwich. With thanks to Route One magazine.

First Essex peak vehicle requirement (PVR) figures from 16 April 2023 service changes:

	Mon-Fri Schooldays	Saturdays	Sundays
BN - Basildon	63	51	29
CF - Chelmsford	80	59	29
CR - Colchester	61	48	26
HH - Hadleigh	55	44	24
Totals	259	202	108
Change from Feb 2023	+9	+5	-2

With thanks to Sean Menzies for extracting this data from Bustimes files made available under the BODS (Bus Open Data Service) Regulations. The previous table was in EBM 707 after the 19 February 2023 service changes (correction to EBM 707, year was incorrectly put as 2022).

Colchester

In the scrap line on 28 April were the four Volvo 7900 hybrids reported as transferred from Basildon for storage last month, plus 32526 and 32629 (see photo on page 11). Some parts were missing from 32526.

News of the Harwich routes (6 April to 5 May). There were no changes to the 102/103/104 timetables on 16 April, but the vehicle duties did change to include workings on Colchester - Chelmsford 371/X71, requiring single-deckers in order to negotiate the Duke Street, Chelmsford railway bridge. Thus the 0720 Maldon - Colchester 75 and 0915 Mistley - Colchester 104 became single deck operated from Monday 17 April, when 69518 worked these journeys, because the bus worked on 371/X71 later in the day. However, on 3 May the duties changed again, and 37136 worked these journeys, followed by 32672 on 4 May and 37042 on 5th. In the afternoons, the double-deckers have worked on 87/U, 370, and 104 respectively instead of 371/X71. Also, double-deckers are not usually allocated to services 102/104 through to Harwich due to problems with hedges and low trees between Bradfield (Village Maid) and Wix Cross. Despite this, three double-deckers did reach Harwich: 37134 on 102 on Good Friday 7 April, 32672 and 37042 on 104 on 5 May.

The single-deckers on 102/103/104 have been the three ADL Enviro 300s remaining at Colchester, 67741/750/805, and Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 2s 69515-69520, plus any of the Wrightbus StreetLites allocated to Colchester, both short and long examples. The 1905 Colchester - Harwich 102 is normally a short StreetLite because this duty includes earlier journeys on services Colchester - Boxted 80A and Colchester - Dedham 81/A.

Clacton routes. Route 74B has again mostly been worked by long StreetLites during the last month. Exceptions have been double deck Volvos 32676 (15th), 37036 (29th), 37042 (5 May), 37135 (22nd), 37138 (6 May), and 37140 (13th); Enviro 300 67741 (14th); Volvo B7RLEs 69515 (17th, 18th), 69516 (27th), 69519 (12th) and, unusually, a short StreetLite, 47656 (25th).

Route 76: 69516 (16th), 63340 (23rd), 32547 (30th), 67741 (1 May, May Day Bank Holiday & 7 May), 63330 (8 May, Coronation Bank Holiday).

Chelmsford

In the scrap line on 16 April were 42930, 42934, 42941, 42944, 42956 (with a large notice in the windscreen "No parts to be removed - this vehicle has been sold" - it has been reported that this vehicle is going to be preserved), 44913 (some parts removed), 64017 (some parts removed), 66818 and 66823. Some of these have since been disposed of, see above. There was no sign of 44005. 66760, 66794 and 66813 had gone since previous observation on 2 April (also see Disposals).

Publicity van SW17 HPE seen in Witham town centre on 24th.

Basildon

Cream and green heritage liveried HH37986 covered two rounders on route 100 (18th pm).

Back in service 44908 on 251 (1 May, May Day Bank Holiday).

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Stephen Barham, Richard Delahoy, David Edwards, Matthew Elsey, John Lidstone, Gareth Norris, John Podgorski, Ian Ransom, Derek Stebbing, Andrew Toms, Robert West, Bustimes, Bus Lists on the Web, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

Right: The small batch of First Essex short Enviro 200 MMCs, 44659-62, are in the process of being repainted from Urban livery to red shuttles livery. The first to be done was 44662 (YX66 WBG), seen here in Victoria Road, Chelmsford on 23 February 2023.

William Morrison



First Essex News in Pictures

69431 (AU58 FFT) outside Chelmsford Railway Station on 27 March 2023 on a C1 with a blind display for a short working. This was an early repaint to Essex Bus green livery and has the strapline "Chelmsford City travel from £1" on the cover panels; since then the company has standardised on "pay contactless on all our buses" for single-deckers in this livery. The StreetLite behind is 47604 (SN14 FFJ) on route C4.

David Moth



As reported on page 7, driver trainer 66825 has moved to Norwich, where it has been reunited with sister 66824 (MX05 CEV). They had been together at Basildon after acquisition in December 2008 until 66824 moved to First Eastern Counties in August 2018. Here is 66824 at Woodbridge on 21 August 2019, whilst it was on loan from Norwich to Ipswich.

Derek Stebbing



As noted above, 67194 (SN66 WKR) has gone to ADL Harlow to have luggage racks fitted and to be repainted into Airlink livery for operation on route X10. Here it is on the route prior to this, still in Park & Ride livery, in Broomfield Road, Chelmsford on 8 April 2023.

David Moth



Nine of the 12 ADL Enviro 300s at Colchester have now been transferred to Chelmsford. 67756 (SN62 ASU) is seen on route C1 in Broomfield Road on 4 May 2023. Last May's issue (EBM 697) included an offside shot of this vehicle by the same photographer, on route S1 at Wivenhoe.

David Moth



Stranger in Camp

First Eastern Counties low-height StreetDeck 35923 (BN72 TVV) at Quayside Depot, Colchester on 28 April 2023, alongside First Essex's last bus in Barbie livery, Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 32629 (KP54 KAX) and similar Urban liveried 32526 (YJ54 XUT). Ipswich and Colchester's engineering are now combined which probably explains 35923 being there.

David Edwards



Super Rear Adverts

Basildon's StreetLite 47653 is another to receive a super rear advert for recruitment. This one has the 'Smilers Wanted' strapline. At Colchester, Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 37034 (YJ06 XKZ) has received one for Pure Orthodontics, as seen at Quayside depot on 25 April 2023, alongside similar 37015 (WX55 VIC).

David Edwards



Dealer Stock Movements April 2023

Vehicles In

From **First Cymru**: Volvo B7RLE MX06 VPL, MX56 AFE/K/O; Volvo B7TL YN06 URF

From **First Eastern Counties**: Transbus Tridents LK51 UZS, LR02 LXL/U/V/Z/LYD/F. LR02 LXL/LYD/F (fleet numbers 33152, 33166, 33167) were ex First Essex, but they did not operate for FE, being exchanged for older Tridents as newer ones with improved exhaust emissions were required by FEC for the Norwich Low Emission Zone. From **First Essex**: Darts SN05 EAM, WA56 OAU; Volvo B7RLEs YJ05 VVB, MX05 CBF/Y/CDO/CEA/U. These are ex First Essex 42930, 42944, 66760, 66794, 66797, 66813, 66818 and 66823. See page 7.

From **First West Yorkshire**: Volvo B7TLs YJ04 FYE/Z/FZY, YJ54 XUE/O/XLK; Volvo B7RLEs YJ05 VVS/U

From **Pelican**: Enviro 200 MMC SK17 MMU

Vehicles Out

A2B, Cambridge: Volvo B7TL AU53 HKD

Brighton Horizon: Scania N94s KX04 RDU/V/RCZ

Ipswich Playbus: Enviro 400 LK59 DZH

JSM Training, London: Enviro 200 LK08 DWN

McGills, Scotland: Enviro 400s YX62 BFL/BKO

Seven Sisters, Eastbourne: Volvo Ayats EU05 VBK

To Shelton Motors, Ely for scrap

Enviro 200 AY07 CUA

Volvo B7RLEs YJ05 VVB, MX05 CBF/Y/CDO/CEA/U

Darts SN05 EAM, WA56 OAU

Tridents LK51 UZS, LR02 LXL/U/V/Z/LYD/F

To Hardwicks, South Yorkshire for scrap

Volvo B7RLEs MX06 VPL, MX56 AFE/K/O

Volvo B7TLs YJ04 FYE/Z/FZY, YJ54 XUE/O/XLK, YN06 URF

Volvo B7RLE YJ05 VVS/U

Ensignbus Fleet

Vehicle on Loan

Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 127 (36316, LX15GOK) is currently on loan to Transpora Buses. It was seen at their new base in Poole, Dorset on 16 April (prior to this it had last run in service with Ensignbus on 29 March). It is seen **right** at Lakeside Bus Station on 3 December 2022.

Paul Harvey

Other News

Further to EBM 708, ex KMB StreetDeck 160 was still awaiting repaint at Mardens on 26 April.

With thanks to Karl Griffin and Adam Kelleher.



The Managing Director of Ipswich Buses, Heath Williams, retires in May. His successor is Dan Bassett, moving from the position of Service Delivery Director at Reading Buses. Dan Bassett has an Essex connection, in that he was Depot Manager for Arriva Colchester in 2012-14, then Operations Manager for Arriva at Northfleet before moving to Reading Buses. Dan joins Ipswich Buses in the 120th year of municipal public transport in Ipswich, Ipswich Corporation started running electric trams in 1903. Trolleybuses were introduced in 1923 to replace the trams and lasted until 1963. Motor buses were not purchased until 1950. Earlier this year another Scania OmniCity was purchased from RATP London United via Ensignbus, 29 (YR59 FYT), which has been painted in a special green, silver, and cream livery to celebrate the 120th anniversary. At the time of writing it can usually be found on Ipswich town services 2, 5 or 6. So far it has not ventured into Essex.

Regarding the oldest double-deckers in the fleet, DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlanders, 59 (PJ53 OLB) has been withdrawn and 56 (PN52 XBK) is dedicated to school contract 604 to Holbrook Academy, leaving 55/7 (PN52 XBO/J) and 58 (PJ53 OLA) to work into Essex. One normally works school service 693, 0813 Ardleigh - East Bergholt High School and 1545 return, plus the late bus to Colchester on Tuesdays and Thursdays, departing East Bergholt High School at 1650. Another normally works the last journeys on service 92, 1740 Ipswich - Manningtree and 1830 return on Mondays to Fridays. A rare working for 57 occurred on 17 March when it worked on service 93 for most of the day, starting with 0810 Ipswich - Colchester 93A, and finishing on 1925 Colchester - Ipswich X93.

Scania OmniCities continue to work on services 92/93, but the Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekkas hardly ever appear because their 80 seat capacity is required for school services in Suffolk. However on Saturday 15 April, 62 (PJ54 YZV) worked on service 92, starting with 0825 Ipswich - Manningtree and finishing on 1520 Manningtree - Ipswich. Then 62 continued on 1645 Ipswich - Colchester 93 and 1810 Colchester - Ipswich 93. Two days later on 17 April, the OmniDekka new to Network Colchester, 63 (YN06 TFZ), returned to Colchester when it worked 1800 Ipswich - Colchester 93 and 1925 Colchester - Ipswich X93.

During the Easter school holidays, the three Mercedes Citaros 153/154/155 (BF65 HVT/U/V) worked on service 93, alongside a Scania OmniCity or ADL Enviro 200. 153 noted on 3 April, 155 on 4 April, 154 on 5 & 12 April. On Saturdays 1 & 8 April, 153 and 154 were used instead of the expected Enviro 200. Then on Saturday 22 April, 153 and Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 161 (SN57 DCX) were used.

There are no changes to the vehicle types allocated to Ipswich School contracts working into Essex as per EBM 702 page 21.

This column reports on Ipswich Buses' services operating into Essex, but for any reader visiting Ipswich, or interested in the core network of Ipswich town services, Roger French OBE DL MA, retired Managing Director of Brighton & Hove, recently visited Ipswich, and his report can be read on the blog: <http://busandtrainuser.com>.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy, route-one.net, Ipswich Buses website, Ipswich Transport Society and Ipswich Buses Enthusiast Facebook Group.



Ian Ransom

Disposals

Transbus Trident / East Lancs PNO4 XDK and Scania N94 / East Lancs YN55 NGY have both been sold to WB Chambers Farms of Maidstone.

Thanks to Adam Barham

Harlow

Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 3873 has been delicensed.

With the introduction of service reductions from Monday 17 April, and consequent reduction in PVR, the daily cuts that were occurring have been eliminated almost entirely.

Colchester

Southend VDL SB200 3777 (KX09 KDN) was received on loan on 13 April, entering service the following day, but returned to Southend on the 18th. It was used on route 133 as well as town services. Southend Volvo B7RLE 3816, in Southend Transport livery, was also received at Colchester but was returned without being used.

Southend

As noted above, 3777 went on loan to Colchester briefly in mid-April.

The solitary original style Enviro 400 (with Trident chassis) at Southend, 6458 (SN58 ENX, in Remembrance livery) was withdrawn here after service on 15 April and transferred to Ware. See photo **opposite**.

In its place, Southend have received 6530 (YX16 OJA), ADL E40D / Enviro 400 MMC H47/30F, from Maidstone. It is in the current Arriva livery and had been new to Arriva Midlands (Leicester) as their 4501. Unlike the other ones at Southend, it doesn't have the large intrusive CCTV screen at the front of the upper deck, improving the view out of the front. It was collected on 16 April and entered service the following day. It is seen **below** paused outside Morrisons at Hadleigh Church on its delivery run from Maidstone to Southend on 16 April. **Matthew Evans**. The destination display did not see the light of day this year with the unfortunate cancellation of the South East Bus Festival (due to have been held on 1 April) due to a waterlogged site.

Service revisions are expected in June or July, details awaited. It is thought this will involve a slight reduction in the PVR and we would expect it will see the withdrawal of the Southend Transport liveried Volvo 3816, whose MoT runs out on 4 July. The previous plans to convert it to a driver trainer (reported about two years ago) fell through.

Further to the note and photo in EBM 706, Enviro 400 driver trainer T199 (SN08 AAE) returned off loan from Northfleet by 13 March.



As noted on the previous page, 6458 (SN58 ENX) has transferred from Southend to Ware. Here it is on route 310 at Bridleway North, Hoddesdon on 28 April.

Allan White



3771 (FL63 DXB) has now settled to be a regular performer on route 724 in its new Green Line livery. It is about to depart from Harlow on 14 April 2023 on its second journey to Heathrow Airport having previously started at 0550. The second vehicle in this livery, 3798 as reported last month, has black around the lights and on the sill under the windscreen.

Owen Woodliffe



Arriva have withdrawn route 86 (Harlow -Waltham Cross) which had been taken over from defunct EOS in August 2018.

1519 (YJ58 CCF), the only Optare Solo SR in the Arriva Essex fleets, is at the recent extension of the route from Harlow Bus Station, Templefields at 1505 for the penultimate journey on the last day of their operation, 14 April. From 17 April Vectare took over the route which was renumbered 505 (see photo on page 18).

Owen Woodliffe



With thanks to John Card, Nigel Clark, Matthew Evans, John Lidstone, Adam Kelleher, Keith Sadler, Jonathan Thompson, LOTS and the M&D & East Kent Club.

Withdrawn Vehicles

254 EU05 AUR ADL Dart SLF has been reported scrapped after parts cannibalisation at CN.
 513 LB02 YXD Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Gemini has gone from HD to Shelton Motors, Ely for scrap following fire damage.

Significant Allocations

255 EU05 AUT	CN	Used by KN for three days before Easter holidays, returned to CN
262 EU58 JCI	SY	At SY late April
276 YX57 BXD	CN	Used by KN for four days on services, returned to CN after 6 April
821 YN56 FFA	KN	)
823 YN56 FFC	KN	) Both on Colchester school contracts from Kelvedon
822 YN56 FFB	SY	Appears to be having parts replaced at SY
872 PN09 EMK	SY-KN	Arrived KN 17 April returned to SY by 28 April

Fleet News

Enviro 400 641 (LK08 FLL) returned from loan to Konectbus and was back at work from Clacton as of 13 April.
 Enviro 200 297 (SN10 CCZ) remains with Konectbus.

Volvo B7TL / President 588 (PJ02 RBY) is stored withdrawn at HD, having been moved from KN in March this year.

Enviro 200 274 (YX60 FCE) entered service in new fleet livery on Monday 24 April on route 77.
 Scania / Olympus 872 (PN09 EMK) was on loan from SY to KN between 17 and 28 April.

Optare Solo 910 (SF04 SKD) is long term VOR at HD, having last been used at KN on 2 March 2023.

Dart SLF 259 (EU56 FLP) has caught up with the others in the fleet losing its Covid mask, but has not had a front fleet name replaced as yet. It is seen **top opposite** in Colchester High Street having unusually worked the service 50A into Colchester on Saturday 29 April 2023. **Mark Lloyd**. Photos of it with its mask were in EBMs 695 & 707.

Enviro 200 Esteem Driver Trainer LX09 AZP is now numbered 9273. It is seen **bottom opposite** in Osborne Street, Colchester on 27 April 2023. **Tom Lloyd**

Convertible open top Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Gemini Eclipse LF52 ZNE has been numbered 502, following on from 500 and on loan 501. Details of this vehicle were in EBM 704, page 18. It has recently been repainted at Mardens (including the roof) from heritage London General red and white livery to all over light blue, with a curved vertical white stripe towards the front, remarkably similar to Arriva's current livery. However, it is to gain decals before entering service.

Service News

On 16 April the Clacton route network was amended, with timetables including a reference to Endeavour. Endeavour is a project which reviewed and aims to improve the network. Customer surveys were completed, a meet the manager session was held in Clacton and these exercises were used to deliver a new set of timetables including new routes and timings to help with network reliability, punctuality and improve connections between Clacton, Colchester and Walton-on-the-Naze.

Hedingham have been providing buses for the recent Greater Anglia Rail Replacement services with 9 April seeing 279 (YX57 BXH) on the Braintree to Witham service surprisingly, along with veteran Volvo B7TL / President 573 (W491 WGH). The following day, Easter Monday, was undertaken by Dart SLF 258 (EU56 FLN) and Scania OmniDekka 817 (YN06 JYB) and 15 April Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus 535 (LX59 DCY) and OmniDekka 813 (YN55 PZU).

Vehicles have also appeared on the longer Marks Tey - Ingatestone route.

With thanks to Jeff Clayton, John Lidstone, John Podgorski & the Hedingham website.



Right: As reported in Service Revisions last month, Vectare have taken over M-F route 86 from Arriva and renumbered it to 505 retaining the same route, from Harlow Templefields to Waltham Cross, and frequency, although their existing Saturday service with this number, that only runs between Harlow Bus Station and Waltham Abbey, has not been changed. See also page 15. Enviro 200 MMC 319 (SN16 OVO) is at Waltham Abbey during the first week of Vectare operation on 19 April 2023.



Owen Woodliffe

Below: Flags out in a very wet Brentwood High Street on 5 May, the day before the Coronation, with Enviro 200 MMC 318 (SN16 OVM) on route 61. **Chris Stewart**



Airport Bus, Stansted Airport

BX65 WBE and BX65 WBO, a pair of Caetano bodied Scania K360s (C49FL), have gone from here.

Barker, Roydon

Dennis Javelin N982 BHE, with W S Coachbuilders DP33FL body, has gone from here.

Flagfinders, Braintree

The small yard next to Kelvedon depot is now used for extra parking. It had been previously used to store cars and vans. Mercedes-Benz Sprinter VU53 FYR was present on 2 April 2023.

Fourways, Highwood

LN51 KYP, a Plaxton H74F bodied Dennis Trident, is no longer here.

Lodge Coaches, High Easter

Two rare vehicles have been sold on, but another has been acquired.

Further to EBM 687, 1949 vintage Bedford OB / Duple Vista LTA 908, acquired in May 2021, was not after all restored and has been sold to James Eastwood of Troopers Lodge Garage, Bourton on the Hill, Gloucester, for restoration and use in James's vintage hire fleet.

Further to EBM 695 (with photos on the inside cover of EBM 696), former Dorset County Council Education Committee Bedford MLC bus FJT 86, which also did not receive a planned restoration, has been swapped with Anthony Slater (trading as English Riviera Sightseeing Tours, Torquay) for Gilford AS6 / Taylor DX 9547, B20F. It is thought that Mr Slater will use FJT 86 on the Agatha Christie Tour. He had only acquired the Gilford in November last year from the family of its previous owner, the late Malcolm Skevington. Prior to that it had been on loan to Bressingham Steam Museum as part of its Dad's Army display. It was new to Rivers, 'Blue Safety Coaches', Ipswich in December 1931. It is currently in Blue Safety Coaches cream and two shades of blue livery, with fleet name and fleet number 5. **Richard Delahoy** took the photo **on the next page** at the museum on 24 April 2019.

An information board alongside gave more details of the history of the bus: "The A6 chassis was built in 1931 by The Gilford Motor Company in their Bellfield works in High Wycombe. It was then driven as a chassis cowl to Norwich where the body was built and installed by Eaton Coach works, a subsidiary company of Taylors of Cringleford. This work was carried out for Mr Rivers, the owner of a bus company called Blue Safety Coaches, and this vehicle was part of his fleet until a sale when it was bought by Mulleys Motorways who then painted it in their livery of orange and white. Later Mr Mulley returned it to its original Blue Safety Coaches livery and this was how it appeared in the Dad's Army episode "Everybody's Trucking" [the first episode of Series 8] along with several other Mulleys vehicles [not buses or coaches].

"Later the vehicle was sold to Jeff's Coaches where it was used for weddings and private hire until it suffered catastrophic engine failure so the engine was part stripped and the vehicle was pushed outside where it started to fall apart. After some years it was spotted by a member of the British Bus Preservation Society and permission was given for them to put it into dry storage. This is how it remained for fourteen years until they were able to gain ownership and then within a few weeks it was passed on to Malcolm Skevington who, with a band of enthusiastic restorers, spent the next five years returning it to its present condition. It was a condition of the BBPG that the vehicle was restored as it was originally built and this has been done with a new ash frame and the original engine repaired to a running condition. A few changes have been incorporated to comply with modern road conditions and modern adhesives and sealants used to improve its life expectancy. The bus has kindly been loaned to the museum by its owner Malcolm Skevington."

Quality Asset, Wickford

Wrightbus Cadet B44F bodied DAF SB200 YJ03 PFG has gone from here. At one time this vehicle was operated by Lodge Coaches, High Easter where it was registered as E20 DGE before reverting to its original registration.

South East Coaches, Wickford

YD65 DOH, a VDL FHD2-129, has been registered to G8 VDL.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy, Adam Kelleher, John Podgorski, Bus & Coach Preservation and the PSV Circle.



Basildon Community Transport Services is a local charity providing transport services for the residents of Basildon Borough (including Basildon, Billericay and Wickford) for people who are unable to use public transport due to illness, age or rural isolation. Minibuses and volunteer cars are used for health appointments, shopping, social events and day centres. BCTS also operate a Section 22 bus route from Afflets Court & Moatfield to Basildon Bus Station. (N.B. Section 22 refers to the permit scheme under the 1985 Transport Act whereby community groups that are 'not for profit' can run local bus services without a conventional operator licence). Route SB81 has just one round trip on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays only. Iveco RE71 OVO (named 'Dave') is seen **below** at the bus station ready for the return journey at 1200 on Tuesday 25 April 2023. Alongside is First Essex Enviro 400 33419 (WA56 FTU) on route 300. **Andrew Sugden.** In this photo some of the results of the recent refurbishment of the bus station can be seen, including the new yellow barriers and black paint.





Above: In contrast to the photo opposite, a much more modern Lodge's vehicle. Mercedes-Benz Tourismo 46 AEW at Ingatestone on Great Anglia Rail Replacement on 16 April 2023. This was new to Shearings in March 2015 as BN15 WXY. The registration 46 AEW had previously been used by Lodge's on a Setra S416GT-HD coach new as BV55 FPN to King's Ferry, Gillingham in February 2006. **David Bateman**

London Borough of Havering

London Borough of Havering vehicles are becoming increasingly frequent visitors to Southend. BCT 0221 (BJ11 DZY) is seen **below** on Eastern Esplanade on 29 March 2023. This is a Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2, new to First Capital as VN36156 (in the same batch as Ensignbus's 133-5/8-9 listed last month), later to Tower Transit when First Bus gave up their TfL services. It was acquired by Ensignbus as dealer stock in July 2020 and was sold to LB Havering in April 2021 after conversion to single door. However, before its sale, it was loaned by Ensignbus to First Essex between September and December 2020 for use on school services during the pandemic (more details in EBNs 678-681). **Andrew Sugden**

A photo of 36156 whilst with First Essex, taken at Hullbridge, was on the rear cover of EBN 678.



Essex Independence - Eastern Transport Holdings

In March 2023, Bill Hiron gave a talk to the Omnibus Society in London which was also attended by a number of EBEG members. Here are some highlights, collated by Richard Delahoy.

Bill started by outlining his history in the bus industry, from transport studies at Loughborough University and a place as one of the final people on the NBC graduate training scheme. His career took him through various companies, ending up locally as Managing Director of Thamesway, then MD of Eastern Counties and finally Divisional Director, Midlands & East Anglia for First. After he left First he worked in a number of roles, including for TGM Group (which involved setting up Network Colchester to acquire Arriva's operations there, as outlined in EBM Extra 2, Autumn 2022) and in 2001 bought out John Stephenson, the majority owner of Stephensons Coaches, then a relatively modest coach operator with one depot at Rochford and a few bus services. His co-owner was Group member Lyn Watson, who sadly died in 2017, after which Bill became the sole owner.

We don't have room here to repeat the full history (see Geoff Mills's book published in 2018, a few copies of which are still available from the company) but Bill spearheaded the expansion of bus operations across Essex and into Suffolk and Hertfordshire - and, latterly, Cambridgeshire as well. Coach operations were wound down and today only one coach is still owned and that only for a school contract. A major development was the acquisition of NIBS in 2018, with Bill setting up a holding company, Eastern Transport Holdings, to own both Stephensons and NIBS, which continue to operate as separate companies each with their own O licence but with common management. Galloway Travel Group, based at Mendlesham in Suffolk, joined the family in 2019 but is held outside of the holding company and operates private hire, excursions, coach holidays and National Express contracts.

Bill provided some statistics to describe the current operations (as at February 2023):

Company	Stephensons	NIBS	Galloway
Vehicles	98	33	24
Staff	157	48	45
Depots	7	2	1
Turnover	£11m	£3.5m	£10m

Breaking down the Stephensons and NIBS' part, they operate from the following depots - figures at March 2023:

Location	PVR*	Spares	Total	Notes
Rochford	11	2	13	
Boreham	14	11	25	
Maldon	11		11	Sub depots of Boreham, spares counted in Boreham
Braintree	9		9	
Frating	8		8	
Haverhill	17	5	22	
Ely	5	2	7	
Wickford	27	5	32	(Two separate sites in Wickford)
Brentwood				
Reserve buses	---	2	2	Excluding driver trainers (2), vaccination buses (2) and heritage buses (2)
Total	102	27	129	

* PVR - Peak Vehicle Requirement (on Monday to Friday schooldays).

Across Stephensons and NIBS there is a mix of commercial bus services - including commercially operated school buses to selective and faith schools (where the local authorities do not provide free transport) - tendered services, school contracts, rail replacement, etc. Major revenue sources comprise bus contracts (30%), scholars passes (20%), on-bus fares (13%), concessionary travel reimbursement (9%) and Government support (8% - CBSSG/BRG). Major costs are driver wages (35%), other wages (12%), fuel (14%), parts (10%), depreciation / finance costs (11%), overheads (14%), insurance (4%).

Bill noted that whilst fare paying passenger numbers have recovered reasonably well post-pandemic, concession numbers have plateaued at about 60-70% of their previous level. Tendering continues to offer opportunities, as seen in Cambridgeshire last year, but equally is at risk of local authority spending cuts, with Thurrock Council potentially poised to cancel their only three local bus contracts, all operated by NIBS (see page 6).

Summarising the active fleet (as at February 2023):

Stephensons:

Type	Quantity	Fleet Numbers
Volvo B10M	1	200
Optare Solo	4	323-5/8
ADL Dart or Enviro 200	40	407/13/4/21/2/4-7/31-6/40/1/8/9/61-81
Scania N230, N250 or N94	51	501-7/9-12, 531-5, 601-10/21, 631/3/5-49, 901-7
Volvo B7TL	2	702/4

NIBS:

Type	Quantity	Fleet Numbers
ADL Enviro 200	14	401/2, 418/9/38/9/42-5/7/50-2
Scania N230 or N94	19	513-6/21-8, 626-30/2/4

Below: As the tables above show, the fleets are dominated by just two types - ADL Enviro 200s (with just a solitary Dart left) and Scania double-deckers. Both types include a mix of buses bought new and judicious second-hand purchases. The first Enviro 200 bought new was 421 (EU09 NYO) a short version with 29 seats, frequently to be found on Essex CC contract on service 14, Southend to Foulness / Shoeburyness, a contract that Stephensons still hold today. It was caught in the flat, open countryside typical of the area, at High Houses, between Barling and Stonebridge, on 22 April 2020. The lettering at the top of the windscreen celebrates Stephensons winning the coveted title of Top Independent Operator at the UK Bus Awards. **Richard Delahoy**



Braintree Bus Interchange Further Update

We reported on the reopening of Braintree Bus Park as Braintree Bus Interchange in EBM 693 (January 2022) with an update in the following issue. On 21 January 2023 **Richard Delahoy** made a return visit a year on, when he took these photos, to see how things were progressing and whether the shortcomings identified at the time of the reopening had been addressed.

Since January of last year work has been completed, with all stops / shelters now fully flagged and shelters displaying both printed and real-time information....



... the shelters however are quite small and are open on two sides, so don't actually offer much by the way of 'shelter'.

Some barriers have been erected but nothing has been done to stop pedestrians walking across the apron, indeed there are not even any warning signs...



... hence people can still be seen walking behind parked buses which could start reversing at any moment.

One point that we weren't sure of last year was whether buses could exit the Interchange right along Victoria Street and left into Fairfield Street and make use of the bus gate in Fairfield Road. Most were exiting left, involving a long detour and making the bus gate redundant. A complication at the time of Richard's 2023 visit was that building work on The Picture Palace (the former cinema, now a Wetherspoons) was obstructing Victoria Road and so many buses exited left to avoid this. However, more were turning right than had been the case when the Interchange first opened, as illustrated by Stephenson's Enviro 200 474 (EU65 EOK) - it has just cleared the pinch point in Fairfield Road and waits to turn right onto South Street on its way to Halstead.



FA Trophy Final May 1992

This article was due to appear in EBM 697, but lack of space in that issue and subsequently have meant that it has been held over to now. So instead of 30 years ago as planned, now 31 years ago!

Further to Allan White's letter about Eastern National open-top KSW WNO 479 being used for a victory parade in 1971 for Hoddesdon Town FC in EBM 690 and the follow up piece on the FA Vase in EBM 691, EBM 692 had a photo of an Eastern National open-top KSW being used in Colchester United's Watney's Cup victory parade the same year. It was claimed that 1971 was by far the best year in Colchester United's history. As a Fourth Division side they beat the, at the time mighty, Leeds United 3-2 in the FA Cup, which still ranks as one of the greatest giant killings of all time. Then, in the summer, they won the Watney Cup.

However, 1992 wasn't far behind 1971. Colchester United had been elected to the Football League in 1950, but forty years later the team came bottom of the Fourth Division and were relegated to the Football Conference. Despite the ignominy of losing their League status, there was a spin-off bonus of being eligible to participate in the FA Trophy for non-league teams, and they won the trophy two years later in 1991/92, beating Cheshire side Witton Albion 3-1 in the final at Wembley, 31 years ago this month. They had been runners-up in the Conference in 1990/91 (in the days when only the champions were promoted) but then won the title the following season to complete the double of League Champions and FA Trophy winners and be promoted back to the Football League.

The FA Trophy final was played on 10 May 1992 in front of a crowd of just over 32,000 of which an estimated 23,000 were Colchester fans. Colchester Borough Transport, as it then was, provided probably most of its coach fleet plus several normal service buses, and local operators such as Ford's of Althorne, Partridge of Hadleigh, Osborne's of Tollesbury and many others contributed vehicles.

David Bell took a selection of photos of the buses and coaches used to transport fans to and from Wembley, all were taken close to Wembley Stadium. The vast majority were taken on the last part of the approach road to the stadium and are just a few yards away from turning into the coach park. The photos on this and the opposite page were taken in the coach park and the Brandon's DMS was approaching from a different direction on Engineers Way.



Opposite page: The Colchester United team coach. Osborne's of Tollesbury 31 (5367 RU) the second Leyland Royal Tiger Doyen to be built at Workington, C47Ft, delivered new to Clyde Coast member Hugh Frazer of Fairlie in January 1985. It had been exhibited at the 1984 Commercial Motor Show. It only lasted until August 1986, when it was traded into Arlington Motor Company (dealers) of Enfield and was resold in March 1987 to The Travellers Coach Company in Hounslow, then in September of that year to Osborne's of Tollesbury. It moved again in May 1994 to Safedrive Coaches of Shenley, Seabrook Coaches of Hythe in July 1995, Buzzlines of Ashford in October 1995 and finally to Smith of Molash in June 1996. With thanks to David Devoy for some of this information.

Right: The CBT Coachways fleet was the coach operation of Colchester Borough Transport at the time. 46 (F246 MTW) was an all Leyland Olympian, new to Colchester in September 1988. After sale of the company to British Bus, 46 transferred to sister company Southend Transport in late 1993 and received Southend Transport 'London Coachlink' livery for use on commuter services. It returned to



Colchester in 1996 and gained normal bus livery (as on the Lynx in front of it in this photo, and more clearly as on the Lynx on the next page). It later received Arriva and Burton's livery. It was saved from a scrapyard and is now preserved in the livery it wore when with Southend.

Right: Ford's Coaches Bristol VRT / ECWs. XNV 882S was new to United Counties then moved to Milton Keynes Citybus before being acquired by Eastern National as their 3209 in October 1986. It moved to Thamesway with the July 1990 split before being sold to Ford's in July 1991. RRP 857R had exactly the same journey but was sold to Ford's in December 1990. It was Eastern National / Thamesway 3207. XNV 882S later moved on to Emblings and is now preserved as United Counties 882. There is no record of RRP 857R ever moving on from Ford's, it was last recorded there in 2002.



CBT Coachways 107 (H107 JAR) was one of two Ikarus bodied Volvo B10Ms bought new in 1990 by Colchester Borough Transport for their CBT Coachways fleet. Along with most of Colchester's nine strong coach fleet, it was withdrawn in November 1993 shortly after the sale to British Bus. 107 went elsewhere in the British Bus group, passing to Guildford & West Surrey Buses, then Horsham Buses and later to Countryliner.



CBT Coachways 103 (OHE 274X), a Leyland Leopard / Duple Dominant IV new to National Travel East, later with West Riding. It joined the Colchester fleet in 1987 along with sister 104 (OHE 280X). Both survived the 1993 cull of the coach fleet and lasted into Arriva days, not being withdrawn until 2000 (July for 103 and October for 104) when they passed to Arriva Fox County; 103 then went on to Arriva the Shires in January 2002.



Leyland Lynx 38 (G38 YHJ), new to Colchester Borough Transport in 1989. Under British Bus it was sold to Crosville Wales in April 1994, later becoming Arriva Cymru and then to Arriva Midlands, latterly operating in Burton and Tamworth from where it was withdrawn in 2005. Colchester bought 14 Leyland Lynxes in total, numbered 27 to 40, but all had short lives in Essex and had left the fleet by Autumn 1994.



Osborne's C101 AFX, a Plaxton Paramount 3500 low screen bodied Volvo B10M new in April 1986 to Excelsior, Bournemouth. Numbered 55 in the Osborne's fleet, it ran for them from April 1988 to December 1994.



Partridge Coaches of Hadleigh F147 SPV. This vehicle was one of a batch of four Leyland Tiger / Plaxton Paramount 3200s taken into the Hedingham fleet with the takeover of Partridge Coaches on 20 July 1996, becoming Hedingham L232.



Ruffle's of Castle Hedingham D271 HFX, a Bedford YNV / Plaxton Paramount 3200, new to Excelsior and ex-GP Travel, London. It later went to Mil-Ken Travel.



Flagfinders F214 GEC, an Elme bodied Leyland Swift. Elme was a Portuguese bodybuilder that built 34 of these rather angular bodies on the Leyland Swift chassis, the first being imported in 1988. This example, a 27 seater, was new in February 1989 to Cook, Braintree (predecessor to the current Flagfinders company). Other Essex operators who bought these new were Chartercoach of Great Oakley, Cunningham Coaches of Corringham and a pair for Clintona Minicoaches, Brentwood. They were all imported through Avondale International of Lytham St Annes, hence the north west registrations.



Tony Glew of Colchester Dodge / Reeve Burgess B348 VTA, formerly with Plymouth Citybus.



Brandon's of Blackmore End KUC 217P, a Daimler Fleetline CRL6 / MCW new as London Transport DM1217. After sale by LT in 1981 it had passed to Florida Coaches of Halstead who were taken over by Brandon's in 1982, they converted it to single door. In 2003 it passed to a third Essex operator, Fargo Coaches of Rayne but shortly afterwards was sold for scrap.



With thanks to Richard Delahoy and Wikipedia.

Eastern National Heritage Bus Display 8 May 2023

This was held at the Langford Museum of Power. Feeder service ran on routes 38 (museum to Witham Station), 90 (circular from the museum via Maldon) and 95 (museum to Goldhanger). As well as preserved Eastern National & Tilling vehicles and a couple of preserved Eastern Counties ones, First Essex heritage liveried 33424, 37985 and 37986 also attended. **Below:** Eastern National MWs. Dual purpose 480 (217 MHK), which became 1402 with the August 1964 fleet renumbering, outside the museum, **top**. 1348 (208 YVX), reported as returned to Essex in EBM 699 (plus a photo in EBM 700), has recently had rear destination blinds reinstated as part of the early stage of its restoration, after more than half a century of these being panelled over. Here it is passing sister 1356 (MOO 177), **bottom**. These were numbered 548 and 556 respectively prior to August 1964. Both **Richard Delahoy**



Photo Feature: Invasion of the StreetLites!



Between 13 February and 18 March 2023, 34 StreetLites joined the First Essex fleet, 13 new, 17 from the former Southampton City Red operation and four from Hoeford. Another three from Hoeford were collected on 6 May. With a total of 98, StreetLites are now the most populous type in the fleet, not far short of a third of the vehicles, and surpassing the combined total of various types and lengths of Enviro 200s.

Opposite: Two still in Southampton City Red livery.

Top: 47665 (SN15 ACF) on route S8 in Colchester High Street on 5 April, passing Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 32669 (SN55 HDZ) still in Midland Bluebird livery. In the background on the left is the building being built in the 1973 photo on page 4.

Alan Moore.

Bottom: Southampton in Chelmsford - 47602 (SN14 FFG) on route C2 outside Chelmsford Railway Station on 28 March. **Adam Kelleher**

Top Right: Rear view of 47602 taken four days previously, this time on route 47 at Chelmsford Bus Station. **Robert Appleton**

Bottom Right: In comparison, 47601 (SN14 FFE) was repainted before it entered service with First Essex. It is seen on route C7 in New London Road Chelmsford on 21 March. These StreetLites have helped to replace the last Darts, but the last one, 42935 (SN05 DZR), seen in front of 47601, remained in service at time of going to press. **Robert Appleton**

Below: A February new delivery, 63460 (MC72 UXY) at Chalkwell Park on route 27 on 5 April. **Andrew Sugden**

Rear Cover: Comparison of shuttles and Essex Bus liveries on new StreetLites. **Top:** Short 47696 (LV22 HVY) was actually a 2022 delivery, one of two vehicles from dealer stock (with 47697) delivered to Colchester last August. They have unusual London registrations and non-standard interiors. It is seen at Newland Street, Witham on 26 April on one of the new X71 journeys introduced from the 16 April service changes. **Dave Arnold**

Bottom: Another one new this February, 63458 (MC72 UXW) departing Southend Travel Centre on route 28 on 20 March. **Richard Delahoy**

Note that on the red livery the yellow dividing stripes continue over the black below the rear side windows, but they do not on the green livery. Also, on shuttles, the shuttles name and strap line are on the cove panels, but on Essex Bus StreetLites the strap line is on the black above the windows and the fleet name is on the black above the windows on the nearside (as per photo below) and on the lower panels on the offside (as per rear cover photo).





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