

Essex Bus News

Issue 684

April 2021



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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Essex Bus News the monthly magazine of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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Above: Ingrave Road Brentwood on the morning of 17 March 2021, with Brentwood Cathedral in the background. 33574 has broken down on route 9, just short of its terminus at Brentwood Station. An engineering van is in attendance behind it and an LJ Transportation tow-truck, LJ66 TOW in front. Newly arrived is an LJ Transportation lorry, LJ02 TOW, to clear up the oil / fuel spillage. **Chris Stewart**

Front Cover: A bright new livery for First Essex, derived from historical Eastern National colours. 69421 on route 42 on Hospital Approach, Broomfield, 8 April 2021. See page 8 for more information and also rear cover. **Richard Delahoy**

Inside Front Cover: What a difference a month makes! Belton Way, Leigh on Sea, on 10 February 2021 and again on 29 March, the day before the hottest March day since 1968. Top photo is First Essex 37985 on route 26, bottom photo is Ensignbus 370 on the first day of this year's Southend open top service. More information on this on page 23. Both **John G Lidstone**.

Below: Keane Travel of Linford KIG 1261 (ex SJ02 ANH, originally 02-D-10245), M&M Coaches SN68 AGF, Felixstowe Travel M20 FX0 and Vectare OP07 ARE (see also page 5) at Ingatstone Station on rail replacement on Good Friday, 2 April 2021, with a new Stadler built Class 745 Inter City EMU to Norwich waiting at the platform. **David Bateman**



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

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Obituary: John Jackson

We were saddened to learn of the death of a noted Essex bus preservationist, John Jackson, who had hosted a number of Group visits to his collection. **Gary Sharpe** pays tribute to a remarkable man.

My dear friend John passed away on Sunday 7 March aged 78 after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease. John had a lifelong interest in military vehicles, as well as trams, buses and railways, being a member of many groups involved in the preservation of historic forms of transport. His own activities in this area saw a number of army trucks restored, some of which he sold on, but keeping quite a few at Wormingford, where he had lived on a farm since the age of two, in his own collection.

Many of the Group members will have experienced these on the several occasions he and Tony Melia hosted us on visits to see progress and the finished article. The two Crossley double-deckers, GR 9007 and VV 9146, were remarkable achievements for two people with modest equipment, but the great engineering and metalworking skills they possessed ensured stunning results. John first met Tony at a Duxford event, the beginning of a long friendship, although Tony was unaware then how his time at Crossley Motors was going to see him restore two buses!

Over the years that the buses took to finish, John, and Tony of course, made many friends in the preservation movement, sharing information, parts and being given items such as destination blinds to complete the job. Such was the respect for their efforts much of it were original items, donated after years of ownership by enthusiasts, no reproductions for John, if he could help it, to keep everything authentic. I should add that John's talents included painting the buses himself.

However, John was the sort of man who was willing to help anyone if he could, an attitude that made others want to help him, he involved himself in village life, being school caretaker, until it closed, had keys to the church as one of those looking after the premises and many other things after his retirement as farm manager, which meant he was a well-known figure around Wormingford. He and Tony were always happy to talk to anyone who showed an interest in the vehicles, at great length for those truly interested, nothing was too much time for them, many groups and individuals have had the 'full tour' and a run out in a bus, finishing with John's usual hospitality involving cups of tea!

John's vehicles will be a lasting memorial to his skills, but my friendship with him showed me something else, despite his outwardly 'strait laced' first impression he had a great sense of humour, and above all was a thoroughly decent man. To use a saying from an old work colleague, he was "one of the best".

Gary's photo below shows John in front of GR 9007 at the HCVS Haverhill rally in 2012 with trophies for best bus and overall winner.



News in Pictures

Some photos to illustrate news items that were in EBN 683. This page all taken by **Owen Woodliffe**. Right: **Vectare**. New route 14 commenced on 8 March 2021 between Upshire and Waltham Cross, providing new links to Paternoster Hill. Recently repainted into new livery, but retaining orange LED blinds, BK13 NZR is seen leaving Princesfield terminus, Upshire on the first day. Photos of this bus in its as acquired livery appeared in EBNs 678 & 682.



Below: **Arriva Harlow**. Route 724 between Harlow and Heathrow

Airport has been re-equipped with TfL Low Emission Zone-compliant Enviro 200 MMCs. 4097, YX17 NYM, is seen at Ware on 19 March 2021 alongside the New River, a man-dug waterway that has carried fresh water from the local springs to London for over 400 years.



Below: **Central Connect**. Recently acquired Solo WX05 RUC has been reregistered to SGZ 2221. Seen at Station Road at Chingford Green on 13 March 2021. A photo of this vehicle with its original registration was in EBN 682.





Above: Another photo of a bus on the **Clacton to Frinton rail replacement services**. Tendring Travel Dennis Trident / Plaxton President X598 USC, which was new to Lothian Transport, at Frinton-on-Sea station on 8 March 2021. The livery is of previous owner Tyrers Coaches and the colours are white, gold and dark blue. **Alan Moore**. Below: On loan to **Vectare**, Optare Versa demonstrator OP07 ARE, in turn on loan to Arriva Southend for schools' duplication, at the top of Crown Hill in Rayleigh, about to turn left into the High Street, on service S7 on 17 March 2021. Arriva Enviro 400 6514 follows behind on route 1. **Ian Dann**



Follow Up Photos to EBN 683



The 'First Essex / EN Alexander Midland Connections' photo feature included Richard Delahoy's photo of 3017 on its first day in service, exiting Southend's Victoria Bus Station on 5 September 1971. It was still in Midland blue and cream livery when **Allan White** captured it at Victoria on 16 July 1972 on his Kodak Instamatic camera. Note the black on yellow "Limited Stop" metal board below the first nearside window; these were more commonly carried on the front immediately above the radiator grille (covering up the Bristol VR badge). These 15 VRs were repainted into standard EN livery between May and September 1972, the first being 3010; the subject here, 3017, lost its blue livery in September, a couple of months after Allan's photo.



Richard's article 'The Case of the Disappearing Tridents' featured two photos of 5442 (W442 KXK), one in original Arriva livery and one in Pilkington of Accrington livery. Here it is in between those two, when at Ware in revised Arriva livery, with its original roller blinds replaced by LEDs. Thursday 10 October 2013 in Cheshunt High Street. Photographer **Allan White** often rode on this type on his local bus route, the 310 from Hertford to Waltham Cross, during the period 2007 to 2013.



Last month's 'From the Colour Archives' featured new to Westcliff-on-Sea FJN 206. Here it is in April 1967 at the Super Coaches yard at Upminster Bridge, in the livery of Upminster & District (a trading name of Super Coaches) although according to the PSV Circle, it had already passed to PVS (London) Ltd by then. Note the 'On Hire to London Transport' label in the destination blind box and the ex-LT RF, one of the original batch of 'private hire' RFs, RF1-25. **Robert Downton**. Regarding its use as a driver trainer, Robert thinks from memory that Super provided driver training. The law / rules regarding training were a lot different then. He can't recall ever seeing FJN in Ongar. The PSVC record it as being sent for scrap by PVS in 2/70.

Service Revisions

by Paul Harvey

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

From **29 March 2021** National Lockdown was eased to allow local, non-essential, travel. From **12 April 2021** bus service levels are being increased to reflect further opening of retail and leisure facilities.

27 March 2021

Ugobus (ECC) - the leisure services HB01, HB04, HB05 & HB06 have been cancelled due to Covid 19 restrictions.

29 March

68 Southend Pier to Leigh Station (D) **Ensignbus** - reintroduction of open top service during Bank Holiday weekends, school holidays and weekends in June, July & September. Route to include Belton Way West & Marine Parade Leigh. Overall frequency hourly, though the school summer holiday period enhanced timetable will be introduced, see page 23 for further details.

1 April

703 Chelmer Valley Park & Ride to Broomfield Hospital, Shuttle (M-F) **Ugobus (ECC)**

Shuttle service withdrawn.

12 April

Arriva Kent Thameside - in **Southend**, all services except service 6 normal timetables reinstated with school extras. Service 6 remains every 30 mins Mon to Fri and normal timetable Sat & Sun. In **Colchester**, services 1, 2, & 8 normal timetables reinstated. Services 77/A operates Mon to Fri peak hours, 133 hourly every day & Park & Ride service reinstated every 20 mins Mon to Sat. Service 900 Braintree Freeport remains suspended. **Harlow** Town Services 1 & 2/3 increased to every 20 mins Mon to Sat, Services 4, 6 & 8 increased to every 30 mins Mon to Sat. Service 9 operates every 40 mins Mon to Sat and service 10 every 20 mins Mon to Fri, every 40 mins Sat with occasional journeys extended to Hertford Mon to Fri. Normal timetable reinstated on services 59 & 308/9. Service 86 seven journeys to operate Mon to Fri. Services 508-510 to operate every 10 mins Mon to Fri, every 20 mins Sat and hourly evenings & Sundays. Service 724 operates hourly Mon to Sat & 2 hourly on Sunday. Sunday timetables mostly remain as normal.

Ensignbus - reintroduction of frequent Mon to Fri timetables to replace the enhanced Saturday timetables.

First Essex - Increases to services, but details not yet available. Chelmsford to Sandon Park & Ride reinstated on reduced timetable. Chelmer Valley P&R remains suspended.

Go Ahead Chambers - normal Saturday timetables reinstated.

Go Ahead Hedingham - normal timetables reinstated on Clacton services 3, 4, 5/A, 6, 7, 74, X76, 97/98, 134, 135, 136 & 137. Normal Saturday timetables reinstated on services 88 & 89.

19 April

13/A/14 Chelmsford to Wickford (M-S) **First Essex**

Service 13A withdrawn from Short Lane & Park Lane Ramsden Heath and to operate via Hawkswood Road & Dowsetts Lane.

1 May

71/C/72 Warley to Stondon Massey (M-S) **Stephensons**

Revised timetable with service 71C withdrawn due to developer funding ceasing.

17 May

A6/A9 Stansted Airport to London Victoria/Stratford (D) **National Express**

Limited service reinstated.



by Adam Kelleher

Acquired Vehicles

33404	VX54 MUA	SFD388BR64GX53588	4410/4	H47/27F	12/04	First Leicester
33405	VX54 MUB	SFD388BR64GX53589	4410/5	H47/27F	12/04	First Leicester

Alexander Dennis Trident / ALX400. Acquired from First South Yorkshire & Midlands, Worcester. 33404 was towed to Hadleigh from Worcester on 25 March 2021, arriving at 1400. It is in heritage Midland 'Red' livery. A photo of it is on the inside rear cover. It entered service on route 21 on 29 March. 33405 arrived at Hadleigh on 30 March, it is in Barbie livery. Both have LED blinds and no lower deck rear window. The acquisition of sisters 33401-33403 was reported in EBNs 680 & 682.

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 12 2020/21 (21 February - 27 March)

32068 CR-CR (oos), 33088 HH-HH (oos), 37027 CR-CR (oos), 63335 CR-CR (oos), 63342 CR (oos)-CR, 63344 CR-CR (oos), 66860 CF-CF (oos), 66873 CF-Disposal, 67160 BN-CF, 67170 CF-Disposal

32068 has been made ready for service (again) but has been placed in the school bus fleet with 30564/7 so should be back in service from 12 April 2021. 33088 is out of use following MOT expiry, its last day was 12 March. 37027 failed whilst on route 70 at Marks Tey on 25 March and has been off road since. The past couple of months have seen a large number of Colchester's StreetLites VOR with various mechanical issues, mostly engine problems although one had a back axle oil seal leak and others have been off for MOT. At the end of Period 12, 63335 and 63344 were out of use, joining 63340 (see below). Conversely, and further to EBNs 681/2, 63342 is back in service. 67170 was destroyed by fire whilst on route 31B at Danbury, by the Green, at around 1715 on 19 March. From photos, only the cab seemed to be intact, with the frame of the vehicle and seats remaining. Most damage seemed to be at the rear. Thankfully no-one was hurt in the incident, the driver and two passengers escaped in time. A photo may still be available on the 'Essex Live' website.

Disposals

On loan 66873 was towed from Westway by a Wrigley's wrecker to PVS, Barnsley on 17 March 2021. It was last reported in use on Bustimes on 31 December 2020 (although for most of February and early March, Bustimes was not working for First Essex vehicles). It had suffered engine failure. The remains of 67170 are stored off site awaiting formal disposal.

New Livery

As readers are no doubt aware, First Bus has been introducing local liveries to its subsidiary fleets. As reported in EBN 678, last September First Essex repainted 69432 into Urban 2 style livery with a white front two-thirds, purple rear and light purple dividing line. This livery was also applied to 69434 and 69429. However, a new green livery has now been introduced, based on First Essex's Eastern National heritage. It is a similar Urban 2 style but adapted by 'Best Impressions' - three shades of green, middle lighter than the front, rear darkest. The darkest shade is also applied to the panel under the front windscreen. The livery includes a new style 'Essex Bus' fleet name, on the lower panels, 'Essex' in white, with the middle bar of the 'E' made up of three Essex seaxes in yellow, 'Bus' in capitals in green, sideways. The dividing line is yellow, but this is split into three separate lines to match the seaxes. On the cove panels each side is the wording 'never miss your bus track it on our app'. At the rear of the cove panels is 'from First'. On the rear is the wording 'get the app'. 69421 was the first vehicle to be repainted into the livery, at Mardens, but it incorrectly did not have the darkest shade applied, the rear colour was the same as the front. This version is illustrated on the rear cover. It briefly entered service on the early morning of 18 March on routes 36 and 31B in this version. It was then parked out of service at Chelmsford depot before returning to Mardens to be amended. It returned to Chelmsford on 6 April and re-entered service the next day on routes 42/A. This version is illustrated on the front cover. The second vehicle to be repainted in this livery, also at Mardens, was 67162 (although this was the first to be finished in the correct version), also shown on the rear cover. It returned to Chelmsford on 31 March and re-entered service, on route 42, on 10 April (its first use at Chelmsford since its transfer from Basildon on 6 February).

Incidentally, the repainting of 67162 means that the small batch of Enviro 200 MMCs purchased for routes X10 and X30 in 2016, 67160-67171 (now even smaller since the demise of 67170 as noted above), are currently in four different liveries - 67160/4 in original silver and green X10 livery, 67161/3 in blue Essex Airlink livery, 67162 in new green Essex Bus livery and 67165-9/71 in Urban livery (67171 was the last vehicle to receive this livery). However, 67160 is due to be the next to be repainted into new livery. Also, some other Enviro 200 MMCs, 67189-67197, also 66-registered, are in all black Park & Ride livery.

School Services 8-26 March 2021

Schools returned as part of the first step to easing Lockdown 3 on 8 March and school services resumed. Last day of term was 26 March. Reports below are not exhaustive. Bustimes was back up and running for First Essex from 10 March, so no reports for 8th or 9th. More school routes are showing on Bustimes than during last Autumn term.

Colchester

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CR. All dates March 2021.)

After their use on normal services over the Christmas holidays and during lockdown, from 8 March 30564 and 30567 returned to the service they were acquired for, school route 17, although 30564 was also used on route 74B on 19 March. Other vehicles reported on the route: 37005 (22 March), 37016 (24th) and 37053 (25th). During last Autumn term, 37005 was the mainstay of school route 67C, but since 8 March this service has been worked by a number of vehicles, including 32087 (17th), 32477 (18th), 32478 (8th), 32629 (26th), 32673 (16th), 37006 (25th), 37016 (12th), 37017 (24th), 37036 (23rd), 37037 (19th & 22nd), 37138 (12th), 63335 (11th), 67737 (19th) and 66810 (10th).

Chelmsford

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CF. All dates March 2021.)

Route S33: 36837 (10th-12th, 16th, 18th-19th, 22nd-26th), 36841 (17th)

S42A in mornings then S57 & S32 in afternoons: 44913 (10th-12th, 16th-18th, 22nd-26th), 44915 (19th)

S42B in mornings then S42A in afternoons: 67160 (11th-12th, 16th-19th, 22nd-26th), 67169 (10th)

525: 36837 (17th), 36841 (10th-12th, 16th, 18th-19th, 22nd-26th)

570: 32483 (10th-12th, 17th-19th), 32484 (23rd), 32551 (16th), 32641 (24th-26th), 32672 (22nd)

620: 32483 (22nd-23rd), 32484 (10th-12th, 16th-19th, 25th-26th)

Basildon

(All vehicles listed below allocated to BN. All dates March 2021.)

Route 561: 32530 (26th), 32532 (10th-12th, 16th-19th, 22nd-26th), 32539 (10th-12th, 16th-19th), 32540 (10th & 12th), 33504

(11th, 16th-19th, 22nd), 33507 (25th-26th), 33574 (24th), 69911 (23rd), 69915 (24th), 69919 (25th)

625: 33086 (22nd), 33424 (10th-12th, 16th-19th, 23rd-26th)

725: 47650 (25th & 26th), 47651 (23rd & 24th), 47653 (10th-12th, 16th-19th, 22nd, 24th)

825: 32260 (23rd), 33504 (10th & 26th), 33507 (11th-12th, 16th-19th, 24th)

Hadleigh

(All vehicles listed below allocated to HH. All dates March 2021.)

Trident / Presidents 33133 exclusively on route 820, 33134 exclusively on route 822 and 33136 exclusively on route 827 on all school days during this period. During last Autumn term these routes were mainly operated by Volvo B9TLs on hire from Ensignbus.

Other Area News & Workings

Colchester

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

41521 continues to see use as a staff shuttle bus but as there are sufficient other buses available to use it tends to often get left in the yard. Further to EBNs 681 and 682, 63340 remains in reserve and hasn't yet re-entered service after its accident repairs. 66872 was parked up VOR for several weeks but has had suspension and body work repairs and is now back in service.

From the return of schools on 8 March, routes 75/A reverted to usually being operated by double-deckers. When schools broke up for Easter, single-deckers again predominated, although there were still a number of double-decker workings.

News of the Harwich routes (8 March-5 April). Services 103/104 had a new Monday to Friday timetable from Monday 8 March when schools fully returned. This requires three buses all day (usually worked by three single-deckers or two single-deckers and one double-decker), and three more in the morning peak 0712-0952. As an example, on 11 March, six buses were tracked as follows:

37037 on 0605 Harwich - Colchester 104, 0735 Colchester High St - Brightlingsea 62, then Stanway - Highwoods 65.

32476 on 0715 Maldon - Colchester 75, not in service to Mistley, 0915 Mistley - Colchester 103. Later, on 1615 Colchester - CF 70.

66804 on 0712 Harwich - Colchester Middleborough 103. Later, on 1435 Colchester - Chelmsford 71.

67739 on 0650 Harwich - Colchester 104, 0820 Colchester - Harwich 104, stayed on 103/104 for rest of the day.

66798 on 0720 Harwich - Colchester 104, 0905 Colchester - Harwich 104, stayed on 103/104 for rest of the day.

66970 on 0725 Colchester - Harwich 104, 0900 Harwich - Colchester 104, stayed on 103/104 for rest of the day.

Easter school holidays schedule started 29 March, the school holiday workings require four buses, one morning peak, and three all day duties. A single-decker worked the am peak duty starting with the 0714 Harwich - Colchester 103; the three all day duties started with 0605, 0650, 0720 Harwich - Colchester (all 104), worked by three single-deckers, sometimes two double-deckers and one single-decker. As an example, on 29 March, four duties (although unusually five buses on this day) were tracked as follows:

67750 0714 Harwich - Colchester 103, not in service to Mistley, 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103.

67736 on 103/104 all day.

67739 in service in the morning, then replaced by 66759 which worked 1205 Colchester - Harwich 103, then stayed on 103/104 for the rest of the day.

67779 on 103/104 all day.

The next day 67756 worked the morning peak duty, and 32477, 37004, 67736 worked the three all day duties.

During this period, all twelve Volvo B7RLEs and all 12 Enviro 300s allocated to Colchester have worked on 103/104, plus five Volvo B7TL / Alexander ALX400s, 13 Volvo B7TL / Wright Eclipse Geminis, five Volvo B9TL / Wright Eclipse Geminis and six StreetLites.

Over Easter, the following were noted:

Good Friday 2 April 66872, 66971, 67742 on 102; Saturday 3rd 63333, 66798, 67779 on 103/104; Easter Sunday 4th 66801, 66803, 67736 on 102; Easter Monday 5th 67736, 67739, 67756 on 102.

On the Clacton routes, double-deckers have been the norm on route 74B in March, with 30564, 32087, 32478, 32673, 37107, 37020, 37035, 37036, 37037, 37053, 37134 37136, 37138 and 37140 all reported, the last of these the most frequently, on 16th, 23rd, 25th, 26th & 30th. 32669, 37004, 37037 and 37134 noted in early April. Single-deckers reported in March were 67737 (27th) and 67805 (30th). On route 76, 66801 (28th), 67736 (Good Friday, 2 April), 67739 (4 April), 67750 (21st) and 67805 (Easter Monday, 5 April).

Some Colchester workings on route 70: 63336 (18th), 63342 (1 April), 66798 (6 & 8 April), 66801 (7 April), 67735 (30th), 67741 (16th), 67742 (19th), 67805 (12th). Some Colchester workings on route 71X: 63331 (16th), 67736 (24th), 67737 (22nd & 30th).

It has been reported in the local press that the old Queen Street bus depot in Colchester is to be redeveloped into '12 creative spaces' by next year.

Chelmsford

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

The Park & Ride Enviro MMCs have not been used in normal service for most of March and early April, pending a return of the P&R service on 12 April (the two allocated to Hadleigh have remained in everyday use). A new occurrence since schools returned has been double-deckers on route 31A: 32641 (17th & 18th), 32650 (11th & 16th), 32482 (19th, 23rd, 24th, 26th) and 32676 (25th) have been reported. The return of schools also brought the return of Essex Airlink liveried Scania's to route 70, with 36838, 36839, 36840, 36842 and 36843 all reported on this route as well as their normal X30. 36837 and 36841 were not seen on either 70 or X30, these were being used on school services (see above). Use on the 70 ceased again at the end of term. Other less usual vehicles on the 70: 42935 (12th), 44537 (24th), 44538 (16th) and 44545 (23rd). Route 71E was renumbered 72 from 8 March, some sightings have been 32483, 32484, 32631, 32632, 32640, 32642, 32672 and 32676. 32640 (11th) and 32672 (24th) were double-deckers on route 71X.

Other unusual / interesting sightings: 32642 on 350 (16th); 36838 on short 42 (17th); 66730 & 66795 on route 31D on Good Friday, 2 April. Driver Trainers: 66846 on Maldon Road, Colchester (10th), at Hadleigh depot (25th), in Rayleigh (31st); 66863 on London Road, Feering (9th & 15th), at Colchester depot for a meal break (7 April).

Basildon & Hadleigh

(All vehicles listed below allocated to BN except where stated. All dates March 2021 except where stated.)

Further to EBN 678, your editor returned to Basildon for the first time since last August, when he went to the Towngate Theatre for his first Covid jab on 30 March. The road works near the bus depot and on Southernhay, between the bus & railway stations, had been completed, with the subways near the railway station removed. The result of the works is not as significant a remodelling of the area as had been envisaged in EBN 678, the major change is that traffic on Cherrydown East going past the Bus Depot and under the nearby bridge on Clay Hill Road is now two-way and most cars use this route. This causes delays for buses accessing the depot, but, conversely, a major improvement is that buses can exit the bus station much more easily. The pedestrian crossing near the bus station exit is now staggered, with pedestrians having to use two traffic light controls. 69520 on route 28 in lower photo.

Both **Adam Kelleher**



Four vehicles were on loan to Basildon during March, all from 16th. CF42945 until 20th, noted on 8/A, 9 and 25. HH44081 until 27th, noted on 5/B/X, 8/A, 10 and 16. CF66730 until 25th, noted on 8/A, 25 and 100. CF69429 until 18th, noted on 25 and 100.

Route 9 continues to be mainly worked by StreetLites and Enviro 400s. Other double-deckers reported have been 32249 (22nd), 32260 (27th), 32526 (13th, 15th & 16th), 32530 (23rd & 25th), 32531 (also 25th) and 32539 (20th). Other single-deckers were mini-Enviro 200 44910 on 24th, and most unusually, Dart 42945 on loan from Chelmsford on 20th.

Routes 94/A continued to be mainly StreetLite operated, but from 20th, one of the vehicles on the service reverted to double-deck, just for a week before schools broke up. 32531 did the first round-trip on Saturday 20th, but was replaced by 33548 for the rest of the day. Seen have been 33548 (26th), 33558 (24th), 33567 (23rd) and 33572 (25th, 27th & 3 April). 47658 broke down in the Old Woodham Road on the 0900 ex South Woodham on 15th and was replaced by 47652. 47656 broke down in SWF on the 1400 service to Basildon on 19th. 67904 replaced it starting with the 1500 ex Basildon. 44909 appeared on the route on 8th & 27th plus 3 April. Other unusual / interesting sightings as follows. Double-deckers on 16: 33424 (22nd), 33425 (10th). Double-deckers on 100: 32249 (23rd), 32260 (26th), 32526 (24th), 33573 (25th). On Good Friday, 2 April, mini-Enviro 200 44908 was on the route. 47656 & 69913 on X10 on 28th. 44909 & 47655 on 251 on Good Friday, 2 April, 47653 & 47658 on Easter Monday, 5 April.

With thanks to R Appleton, S Barham, J Collins, D Edwards, J Elliott, J Lidstone, J Podgorski, C Stewart, First Essex, Bustimes, Bus Lists on the Web, Facebook, Flickr, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.



Above: 44541 passing through Ingatestone on route 351 on 3 April 2021. **David Bateman**. Below: On 10 March 2021 a dustcart caught fire in Clarence Road which meant that buses on route 20 in both directions were diverted along Eastwood Road where 61361 is seen. **Philip Mansbridge**.





by **Peter Mansbridge** with thanks to Andrew Colebourne, Richard Delahoy, Matthew Evans, Ian Dann, Nat Ford, Peter Halls, Keith Sadler, Lee Burvill-Eckett and harlowride.co.uk

Fleet

At **Southend**, Southend Transport liveried 3816 has returned to passenger use, being first noted on 17 March on services 1 & 9, after earlier use on staff shuttles. Correcting earlier reports, it had not been withdrawn but had an extended period out of service, and there are no plans to convert it to a trainer.

1565 & 4072/3 returned to **Colchester** from loan at Southend on 8 & 9 April. 1564 is due to follow, meaning there will no longer be any buses on loan to Southend (this bus does not have a driver's screen so cannot be used in service). Of the four Darts loaned to Guildford, 1559/62 returned to Colchester on 10 April, with 1558/63 remaining at Guildford for now. These returns to Colchester are for the enhanced schedules from 12 April which see the PVR increasing to 29 vehicles on Monday-Friday (including two crew ferry buses).

Harlow allocated Optare Versa 4230 (KX62 JWW) has received current light blue Arriva livery.

Services

Further revised timetables were introduced at all three depots from 12 April, as noted in the 'Service Revisions' section, increasing the service provision as the next stage of the easing of restrictions took effect. At Southend and Colchester this restores most services to their normal pre-Covid timetables, but many Harlow depot services still have reduced frequencies.

At **Colchester**, the internal school duplication ceased at the Easter holidays and none is now planned, following the resumption of normal schedules on the town services from 12 April. The Park & Ride also reopened from 12 April with a 20-minute frequency bus service.

At **Harlow**, the return of schools to normal attendance from 8 March saw additional journeys both at start and end of school day using fleet vehicles and open to all on services 10 and 508/509/510 and the resumption of service S308 journeys for school pupils only in Bishop's Stortford to & from Birchwood School using a fleet vehicle. Service 66 (Waltham Cross - Debden, operated by Ware depot but running largely in Essex) had S66 journeys for use by school pupils only introduced from 8 March and operated by fleet vehicles from Ware. See photo on page 14.

At **Southend**, the internally operated school duplicates continued to run and somewhat bizarrely also operated during the school holidays, presumably because they are part of the standard set of duties, and it was deemed too difficult to remove them from the schedule. With the externally operated duplicates, following issues with overcrowding on various normal bus journeys, additional trips were added from 22 March as follows:

AM: 1 x 8, operated by M&M Staffing; 1 x 29, by Peter Godward Coaches.

PM: 1 x 1, by White Lion Coaches of Addlestone, Surrey, an operator new to this work in Southend; 1 x 8 by M&M Staffing; 1 x 29 by Peter Godward Coaches.

In the afternoon, this brought the total of externally operated duplicates to 12 journeys by 11 vehicles from five different operators.

As a result, one afternoon journey on the 8 was operated by three vehicles, the Arriva service car, an Arriva duplicate and an external duplicate, whilst one morning 7 had no less than four vehicles, two from Arriva, a triplicate from Grange Travel and a quadruplicate from M&M Staffing! The schools then broke up for the Easter holidays after 26 March so the extras noted above may have only run for one week.

Further vehicles noted on hire at Southend since the schools restarted on 8 March, up to Easter, are:

Grange Travel: Van Hool Astromega YJ68 CDX, which is seen on service 9 on 24 March at Victoria Avenue opposite Roots Hall, Southend United's ground in the photo at the top of the next page. **John G Lidstone**. (John has never seen a destination of 'Southend Seafront' before in all the years he's lived in the area (since 1964).)

Peter Godward: DAF DB250 / Wrightbus T88 PGC (LI05 GKY) on route 29, this bus had not been seen on Arriva work since last September. See photo on page 14.

Vectare: Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus BK13 NZS (in their new livery).

White Lion Coaches: Volvo B11RT / Caetano Levante BX16 CLV (previously with Go South Coast on National Express work). The photo at the bottom of the next page shows it turning into Asda at Shoebury at the start of its afternoon run on the S1 to Rayleigh on 23 March. With an operating centre at Addlestone in Surrey, it will have had an 80-mile dead run to get to Shoebury! **Richard Delahoy**. The tally of different buses / coaches observed on hire since last September now stands at **38**.

Other News

The two 'SOS' buses stored at Southend and featured in our January issue (One photo, Three stories), G649 EKA & R614 MNU, have recently been sold by the charity that owned them and have been removed from the Arriva Southend depot. It is thought that G649 EKA, Volvo Citybus / East Lancs, has been sold for preservation but that Olympian R614 MNU has gone for scrap. Confirmation of the ultimate fate of both would be appreciated.



Above and below: details on previous page.





Above: Arriva 6498 in Borden Lane, Debden on route S66 at 0852 on 17 March 2021. **Andrew Colebourne**

Below: Peter Godward Coaches T88 PGC at 0811 on 23 March in Chichester Road, Southend en-route to Westcliff High Schools, duplicating Arriva Enviro 400 6505 which was working the full route through to Belgrave Road. **Richard Delahoy**



Blind Spot Extra - Arriva Southend Duplicates

by Richard Delahoy

As reported under the Arriva notes in recent issues, a variety of buses and coaches from the independent sector have been providing schooltime duplicates in Southend. Their approach to route information varies from nothing at all, through A4 sized notices in the windscreen - some provided by Arriva, some home-made - to comprehensive displays. And a mix of using the S prefix to the route number - or not! Here's a sample that I've photographed since these extras started last September.

Top marks to M&M Staffing who make good use of the PSVAR compliant conversion of Neoplan Tourliner MM68 BUS (right):

Vectare also have white LEDs fitted to some buses including Volvo B7RLE BK13 NKS and Mercedes Sprinter WN69 FVL (below):



Or a mix of both as on Optare Versa demonstrator OP07 ARE:



Finally, White Lion's Caetano Levante spells it out (above left).



But their coaches rely on paper notices, as in Sitcar SF04 ZLV:



Meanwhile, Grange Travel use the LED indicators in a variety of ways, including these two Tourismos (below):



Photo Feature: Essex Buses in Germany

by David Bell

In 2005 I took part in an enthusiasts' tour - 'The Oldtimers Holiday Tour' - organised by Martin Nicholls and Paul Fox. The main aim was to find and photograph English buses overseas especially half-cabs. One of the places we visited was the premises of Heinrich Wulfes near the village of Neudorf Platendorf not far from Hanover in Lower Saxony. Herr Wulfes described himself as a bus dealer and singer under the name of Der Blickfang which roughly translates as 'The Eye-catcher'. By the time we visited in early July he had amassed a sizeable collection of vehicles mostly buses, many of which had been exported to Germany by a bus dealer. Amongst the collection were two former Eastern National FLFs, coach RWC 607 (1640, 2604) still in as preserved green and cream livery & GNO 788B (2812), all white, and former Southend Corporation Leyland Titan PD3/6 / Massey PHI 950 (311) in cream and dark red livery. Herr Wulfes is also believed to have owned former Eastern National FLF BVX 681B (2805). All photos by **the author**.





by Richard Delahoy with thanks to the companies

Fleet

Recently acquired Enviro 200s 438/9 (YY15 FZC/D) (see EBNs 682/3) have been repainted red / yellow and allocated to the NIBS fleet. NIBS Enviro 200 458 (SN55 DVR) has been withdrawn and sold to Herberts Travel of Blunham, Beds.

Allocations

Here is the current fleet disposition, as at March 2021:

Depot	Total	Fleet Numbers
Boreham	49	
Includes Braintree, Maldon & Gt Bromley		
Volvo B10M	1	200
Mercedes Sprinter	1	301
ADL Enviro 200	27	414, 422/5-7, 440/1/8/9, 464-81
Scania N230	11	502-12
Scania N94	9	638/40, 901-7
Haverhill	39	
Includes Bury St Edmunds		
Optare Solo	10	302, 320-8
Dennis / ADL Dart	3	403/6/7
ADL Enviro 200	10	431-4, 442/5, 460-3
Scania N230	1	610
Scania N94	15	631/3/5-7/9, 641-9
Rochford	15	
ADL Enviro 200	5	413, 421/4, 435/6
Scania N230	10	501, 601-9
NIBS Buses	40	
(Wickford & Hutton)		
Optare Solo	1	330
Wrights StreetLite WF	2	341/2
ADL Enviro 200	14	415/7-9, 438/9, 443/4/7, 450-2/6/7
Scania N230	12	513-6, 521-8
Scania N94	7	626-30/2/4
Volvo B7TL	4	701/3/5/6
Total	143	

Below: NIBS 626 and 444 lead a line-up of vehicles at Brentwood Station on 30 March 2021. **Adam Kelleher**



All pupils started to return to school in the week commencing Monday 8 March, and so double-deckers returned to services 92, 93/A, and 194. On 8th, Scania OmniCity 40 (YR61 RUW) worked the all-day duty on Ipswich - Manningtree 92, and 37/41 (YR61 RUH/RVF) worked the all-day duties on Ipswich - Colchester 93/A. Another OmniCity, 44 (YR61 RRZ), worked 1610 Suffolk One - Colchester 93, and 1715 Colchester - Ipswich 93.

The DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlanders also returned to service. On 8 March 55 (PN52 XB0) worked 0811 Langham - East Bergholt High School 194 and 59 (PJ53 OLB) worked 1610 Suffolk One - Manningtree 92 & 1715 Manningtree - Ipswich 92. Due to the number of school services / contracts operated by Ipswich Buses, the DAF DB250s 55-59 are being retained, and they will be repainted into the current purple / green livery during school holidays this year. 55 & 56 are currently in the oldest livery of white with diagonally sloping green skirt. 57-59 are in the next livery of green / purple rectangles separated by white stripes, the so called Battenburg livery, named after Battenburg cakes!

A surprise on 8 March was Scania OmniCity 34 (YR61 RSV) on 1640 Suffolk Rural College Otley - Thorington Crossroads RC1. This is normally a single-deck duty, and on 12th Optare Versa 152 (YK08 EPV) worked the morning journey on RC1 at 0720 from Thorington Crossroads.

Also on 8 March, short ADL Enviro 200s 70/73 (YX59 BZL/BZN) worked Colchester services 4 & 11. The intention is to allocate two short Enviro 200s to these services, but Versas still appear: on 10th 149 (YK08 EPF), on 11th 152 (YK08 EPV) and on 12th 150 (YK08 EPI). Clacton - Mistley 2/A was worked by Versas 152 (YK08 EPV) on 8 March and 148 (YK08 EPE) on 12th. However, Versas 145/151 (YK08 EPA/EPU) have been withdrawn, with 145 sold to Midland Classic at Burton-upon-Trent, leaving four, 148/149/150/152, available for service, mainly on Ipswich town services, thus Enviro 200s were becoming more common on Clacton - Mistley 2/A during March. The new to Ipswich buses Enviro 200s are being repainted into the current livery, and on 3 April 101 (SN16 OGG) worked Clacton - Mistley 2/A.

Ipswich School contracts also restarted on 8 March. Scania OmniCity 46 (SGZ 3346) was used on contract 2A from Feering during the first week, and sister 47 (SGZ 3347) in week commencing 22nd. On 10th, Enviro 200 75 (GD10 MVM) worked Ipswich School contract 6 from Castle Hedingham, via Halstead, White Colne, and Wakes Colne, this contract is not normally worked by Ipswich Buses. On 12th, Enviro 200 74 (DU60 LOJ) worked the Ipswich School contract 10 from Holland-on-Sea, instead of the normal allocation of 1 (SGZ 3351) Volvo B7R / Jonckheere.

Two more Alexander Dennis Enviro 200s have been acquired. 83 (KX58 GUW) from Completely Coach Travel, Norwich, but this will not be working on bus services yet. Instead, it has been converted into a mobile vaccination centre, for use by the NHS to visit parts of Ipswich and East Suffolk where the Covid-19 vaccination take up is low. NHS and Ipswich Buses management have requested that enthusiasts do not photograph 83 whilst it is on this important NHS work. The second Enviro 200 is 84 (MX09 HHS) with B37F seating, acquired from Faresaver, Chippenham. This has been repainted, named 'Peter Bruff', and entered service on Ipswich town routes on 23 March. Peter Bruff (1812-1900) had Essex connections, he was involved with constructing the railway viaduct at Chappel on the Marks Tey to Sudbury line, extending the railway line from Colchester to Ipswich, and later on developing Walton-on-the-Naze and Clacton into seaside resorts.

Not strictly Essex related, but of interest, is that Ipswich Buses had a brand-new bus type on loan for a few days in February. Translink (Ulsterbus) 2501 (XUI 8501) is a new single-deck version of the Wrightbus StreetDeck. It is 12.1m long, with 40 seats, powered by a Mercedes OM934 4-cylinder engine. It was trialled around Ipswich, but not used in service.

Another demonstrator on loan for a few weeks is 501 (YX21 RPO) an Alexander Dennis Enviro 200 MMC in an overall white livery. Allocated to Colchester routes 4 & 11 from 22 March, because Essex County Council are evaluating its stop / start technology.

On the first day of the Easter school holidays, 29 March, all services in Essex were worked by ADL single-deckers: 72 (LX58 LMM) on Ipswich - Manningtree 92, 76 (LX58 LML) & 77 (KX59 GNY) on Ipswich - Colchester 93/A, 73 (YX59 BZN) on Clacton - Mistley 2/A, 70 (YX59 BZL) & 501 (YX21 RPO) on Colchester routes 4 & 11. On 30th, Optare Tempo SR 88 (YJ12 GWC) made a rare appearance in Essex, spending all day on Ipswich - Colchester 93/A.

Another recently acquired bus has an Essex connection. Acquired from Arriva Southern Counties via Ensignbus is YN06 TFZ Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekka, new to Network Colchester in August 2006 with fleet number 102. Fitted with new seats and seatbelts by Ensignbus. Ipswich Buses will have it repainted into fleet livery before it enters service with fleet number 63, so perhaps one day 63 will return to Colchester on service 93/A.



by Adam Kelleher with thanks to Tony Higgs, Ross Newman, Steve Stapleton, Bus Lists on the Web and Flickr

Acquired Vehicles

U09 KRE Alexander Dennis Enviro 200, B29D, new to Arriva London, ENL38, 05/09

From Arriva London, via Ensignbus, at Central Connect by 12 March 2021. It entered service in all red but was repainted into Central Connect livery by 9 April. White LED blinds (with coloured numbers at front) fitted, replacing roller blinds.

P056 JFE Alexander Dennis Dart / East Lancs, B24F, new to Metrobus, 230, 09/06

From Go-Ahead London, via Ensignbus, March 2021. In an overall wrap for the Go-Ahead 'Here East' contract at the Olympic Park.

Disposals

Optare Versas Y112 PKX, Y112 PKY, Y112 PLF (all in all red livery) to Desi at Watford by 19 March 2021.

hedingham

chambers

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

Acquired Vehicle

283 OU57 FGV Short ADL Enviro 200 - full details in EBN 683.

Withdrawn Vehicle

286 HW54 BTY Dart MPD - withdrawn 14 March, sold for preservation.

Significant Allocations

457 CN - HD by 18 March (brief operation at CN post repaint)

524 CN - KN by 8 March, then back to CN by 18 March

521 CN - KN by 17 March, then back to CN by 28 March



Fleet News

264, EU59 AYP, ADL Enviro 200 was repainted into the current fleet livery by 13 March. Both this vehicle and sister 262, EU58 JCI, now sport the newer style of front dash quarter panels, updating their appearance. Ex Carousel OU57 FGV has been repainted from Countryrider livery to current fleet livery and has been renumbered 283 in the Go East Anglia fleet, completed by 2 April. Dart MPD 286, HW54 BTY, has been withdrawn and replaced by 296, SN10 CCY. 286 was collected from CN on 26 March. Previously withdrawn Dart MPDs 285, SN03 EBV, and 288, HW54 BUF, are being cannibalised for spares at CN. Longer term withdrawn vehicles previously stored at CN, 563, V307 LGC, and 581, W956 WGH, have both been removed from the depot, gone by 22 March, presumed for scrap. News of an additional Enviro 200 at HD may have been 298, OU57 FHA, which had failed and was spotted on suspended tow towards CN and then sat in CN engineering depot for a while before repair. 616, SN10 CCV, is VOR at HD following an incident on route 88, where stopped at a bus stop in Chappel, the low sun caused a car behind to hit another car head on and hit the rear of the bus causing rear end damage to 616. The road was blocked for several hours and the backlog of buses stuck included subsequent First and Hedingham 88s and the Hedingham 82A. 873, PN09 EMV, long term VOR, has had a replacement engine fitted and is back in service, but 877, PN09 ENO, is currently VOR after hitting a fallen tree and was under repair at SY.

Service News

School services TLA, 19 and 901-4 group resumed as normal on 9 March. On Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday, Hedingham ran Sunday service timetables. Between 29 March and 10 April route 97/98 saw an increased M-F frequency due to the school holidays. On 5 April fares increased in the Clacton area and there were fare revisions on the 88 and 89 routes to bring both into line with 88 pricing on common sections of the 88 route. By 12 April, due to ease of restrictions further, routes 3, 4, 5A, 6, 7, 74, X76, 97, 98, 134, 135, 136, 137, 88 and 89 all revert to full timetable.



Above & right: As reported last month, demolition work had begun on Tollesbury depot. This was the scene in early March 2021. It took all of the first week of March to carefully remove the asbestos roof. The depot was completely demolished by 13 March. Photos taken by **Paul Layzell** whose father Graham worked there for 50 years. With thanks to **Robert and Claire MacGregor**.

Previous page: Tollesbury depot as it was in 2017 after closure. **Robert MacGregor**.

Below: Last day of service at Tollesbury depot, Trident / ALX400 739 and Dart SLF 260 were the last two vehicles into Tollesbury on 22 July 2016, 260 is seen after return to the depot. **Mark Lloyd**





Dealer Stock Movements March 2021

Vehicles In

From **Abbey Travel**: Volvo B7TL LF52 ZPD
From **Arriva London**: DAF DB250s YJ54CFG, YJ55 WPO/WOR
DAF SB120s YJ06 LFE/F/G-H/K-L/LDK, YE06 HRA/C-D/F/J/HPA/F/J-L/N-P/U/HNT/U
Enviro 200s / LJ07 ECZ/Z, LJ57 UST-V/X-Z/UTB-C, LJ58 AVU-V/X-Y/AWA/C/AUC/X
Darts: LJ54 BAO/U/V/BBE-F/K/N-O/U/LHF-H/K/M-R/LGV, LJ05 GOX/GPK/O/U, LJ56 APZ/ARF/U/X/Z/ASO/U-V/X/AOW-Y, SN06 BPK/U-V/X/Z, SN56 AXG
Enviro 400: LJ60 AWC. Volvo B7TLs: LJ04 LFN/R/YWU, LJ05 BLZ/BMO/U/BKF/L/U, LJ55 BVS-T/V/X/G/K
(Note, all in very poor condition and most are expected to be released to Shelton Motors for scrap, although LJ07 ECZ has gone to Panther Travel for spares - see below)
From **First South West**: Volvo B7TLs WR03 YZV/W
From **First Doncaster**: Volvo B7TLs LT52 WWS/WXD
From **Go Ahead North East**: Volvo B11RTs BX65 WDA/D/E, BV17 GVD/E
From **London Bus Group**: Trident W556 RSG
From **Lothian Buses**: Volvo B9TLs SK07 CAX/CBF/CBO/CBU-V/X-Y/CCA/D, SN57 DDJ/DFC/E-G/J-L/O-P/U-V/X-Y
From **Nu Venture**: Trident LK05 GHA
From **Stagecoach Highlands**: Volvo B12B SN57 AAY/Z/DPV, SV08 GX0/N

Vehicles Out

Volvo B9TLs SN57 DDJ/DF0/DFE: **Als Coaches, Liverpool**
Volvo B9TL BF62 UYK: **ASD Coaches, Strood**
Volvo B9TL BJ11 DZX: **Bear Buses, Feltham, Middlesex**
Volvo B7RLEs SN04 NJF/NHV/NHD/NHZ/NHM: **Clockhouse Farm, Maidstone**
Enviro 400 SN13 CHJ: **Compass Travel, Worthing**
Volvo B5TL KD17 TAU (ex 171-25062): **East Yorkshire MS**
Enviro 200 YX11 CNN: **East Yorkshire MS**
Volvo B9TL FJ57 CZB (ex 07-D-121913): **Farleigh Coaches, Hoo, Kent**
Scania SN57 DBY/DCE (open-top): **First South West**
Enviro 200 LJ09 KRE; Dart P056 JFE: **Galleon Travel, Roydon, Essex** - see page 20
Volvo B9TLs SN57 DFJ/DFA/DFU/DFV/DFX/DFY: **Go Ahead North East**
Enviro 200s GN08 CHF, LJ09 KPX/KRF/KOX/KPA/E/F/O: **Go Goodwins, Manchester**
Solo WK11 APY: **Hulleys of Baslow, Derbyshire**
Scania YN06 TFZ: **Ipswich Buses**
DAF DB250 YJ55 WOR: **Jans Coaches, Soham** (spares only)
Enviro 200 LJ58 AUE: **Johns School of Motoring, Edmonton.**
Enviro 400 LK08 NVF: **Jorvik Tours, York**
Volvo B11RT BV17 GVE: **Lambs Car and Commercial, Stockport**
Scania YN04 GMX: **Lower Rule Farm, Stafford**
Enviro 200 LIG 1677: **Mike Lawrenson, Preston**
Enviro 200 LJ09 KPY: **National Driving Centre, Croydon**
Enviro 200 LJ07 ECZ: **Panther Travel, Harwich** (spares only) - see page 25
Trident LR02 BfJ: **The Rock School Bus, Spalding, Lincs**
Scania YR10 AZO: **Rumwood Green Farm, Maidstone.**
Volvo B11RT BV17 GVD: **SBC Leisure, Rettendon, Essex**
Trident V516 ESC (open top): **Scarborough Suncruisers**
Volvo B11RTs BX16 CLZ/LCP/LCT, BV66 WNY/WHO: **South West Coaches, Yeovil**
Enviro 200s GN08 CGV/CHC: **Thandai Reds, Smethwick, Birmingham**

To Shelton Motors for scrap

Tridents LJ04 LFN, PX54AWU. Volvo B7Ls KV02 VWA/VVY. Volvo B7TL LF52 ZPD. Enviro 200s SN08 AAZ/ACV.

Ensignbus Fleet

Acquired Vehicles

369 EU05 BZM, 370 EU05 VBL, 371 EU05 VBO Volvo B7L / Ayats Bravo open top, OH55/24F, ex Bath Bus Company

All repainted red and silver at Mardens, re-seated with new and padded upper deck seating, cab screens fitted for Covid protection, white LED blinds fitted, service-promotional side advert boards and rear wraps on 370 & 371, with 369 as a private hire and relief bus with Ensignbus lettering on the rear. Route 68 recommenced operation on 29 March 2021, the earliest it has ever started, the day lockdown measures were eased with the removal of the 'stay at home' instruction. The norm always was a mid-May to early June start. It was for two weeks over the Easter school holidays, then a short gap before returning for the May Bank holiday weekends, half term, weekends in June, then throughout summer from 3 July to 12 September, then the following weekend, with the high season timetable of a half-hourly service running from 5 July to 10 September. Due to high demand and the hot weather (with Tuesday 30th being the hottest March day since 1968), on 30 & 31 March it ran every 30 minutes rather than the planned hourly service, with 369 as well as 370 & 372 being used. It also ran half-hourly on 9 April. Ironically, route 68 has been operated with open-top vehicles numbered 370 and 371 before, Southend Transport Daimler Fleetlines 370/1, WIN 370/1J. The route remains as it has done for the last few years, Southend Pier to Leigh and back (returning via the Kursaal), this year, after Leigh Station, buses continue west along Belton Way (see photo on inside front cover) and then along Marine Parade giving a slightly longer ride and better views.

A new minibus for crew ferry purposes is Transit BN64 HAS.

Withdrawals

Volvo B7TL / ALX400 LJ54 BDO, ex 109, to Barway Services, Ely

Enviro 200s 719/720/721 SK15 HBB / YX09 FLD / YX11 HNT to East Yorkshire Motor Services

Hire Buses

The five 11 plate B9TLs on hire to Stagecoach Northampton (BJ11DSX/DTZ/DZZ/EAO/EBL) have been replaced by B9TLs SK07 CAX/CBO/CBU/CBV/CCA. The Volvo B9TL BJ11 DVX on hire to HCT (see photo on inside rear cover) has been replaced by StreetDeck SN64 CTV. Ipswich Buses has Volvo B7RLE SN57 DDF. Go Ahead London have Enviro 200s GN58 BUP/BUU.

Below: 370 at Leigh Broadway on 30 March, with Ross Newman driving. **Richard Delahoy**



As mentioned above, on the inside rear cover is a photo of BJ11 DVX. The previous in registration sequence, BJ11 DVW, has been retained by Ensignbus as their 137 (ex-First / Tower Transit VN36137). It is currently in use on TfL school routes after which it will be converted to single door, as reported in EBN 680. Its retrofitted LED blind displays contrast to DVX's roller blinds. It and BCI 149 (LX17 DZK) are seen working extras on TfL school route 679 in Woodford Green on 16 March 2021. Both **Andrew Colebourne**



Acquired Vehicles

Enviro 200s purchased from Ensignbus, ex Arriva London in all red, for conversion and to use in fleet as they are Euro VI: LJ09 KPR being used as dual door on rail replacement.

LJ09 KPT has now been converted and is going into paint on 12 April 2021. Prior to this it was used in as acquired state on rail replacement, as seen below leaving Frinton-on-Sea station on 8 March. **Robert Appleton**
LJ09 KPU awaiting conversion. LJ09 KR D conversion started.

An Enviro 200 has also been purchased from Ensignbus for spares, also ex Arriva London: LJ07 ECZ - see page 22.

SV08 GXP a Volvo B12B / Plaxton Panther, purchased from Coach Hire Surrey for fleet. New to Stagecoach Bluebird, 53104.



Disposals

Former Hong Kong and Flagfinders, Leyland Olympian / Alexander J590 CEV to a private owner.

Dealer stock Optare Solos CE52 UWR and FY52 RZC to Galleon Travel.

EASTERN NATIONAL

**IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE DE-RATIONING OF DIESEL OIL,
THE JOURNEYS TEMPORARILY WITHDRAWN FROM THE
TIME TABLES, WILL BE RESTORED WITH EFFECT FROM
SUNDAY, 31st MARCH, 1957**

The Saga of Routes 7 & 7A

by Owen Woodliffe

I am sure that I am not alone in using lockdown time in looking through past photographs and remembering various events. Whilst doing so I recall that after my retirement I took the opportunity to travel from my home in Chingford to the North and Mid Essex Group meetings by bus. At that time, I could use a permutation of routes via Harlow and on many occasions passed through Bishops Stortford. It then occurred to me how many different operators have appeared on routes 7/7A and delving through back issues of EBN, I discovered that this century there has been no less than nine.



The Rural Bus Grant provided an opportunity for bus services to be introduced serving small communities - in Essex these were termed 'Village Link'. Alan Osborne has advised me that the 7 started on 22 February 1999 and ran hourly on weekdays from Bishops Stortford via Takely, Stansted Airport, Molehill Green, Henham (previously only served by infrequent Biss Bros 317), Elsenham and Stansted Mountfitchet, then a loop round Bentfield Green and back to Bishops Stortford. Operated by Essex Buses (Eastern National) with Mercedes Varios, believed leased from ECC, 430-435, later Sema 52580-5 (V430-5 GTW), in a unique 'Anglia' livery of yellow with light red skirt, which were also used on sister Village Link 5. **Photo 1** at Stansted Airport. Inevitably it would be likely that Council supported routes would change to a low-cost operator and this duly happened on 24 January 2005 when Stansted Transit took over both the 5 & 7, initially with the Varios hired from First Essex, which were gradually returned to be replaced by P-reg ex London Darts.

Two years later the 7A appeared, although not a Village Link route, it being numbered as a derivative of 7 since both served Stansted Mountfitchet. This replaced Excel's 333 that had been truncated in February 2007 at Stansted Airport and rerouted via Herts and Essex Hospital. Six new Enviro 200s (KX57 FMA/C-G) were purchased for routes 5 and 7 but these were soon dispersed to other routes. FMA is seen when brand new at Showbus on 16 September 2007 (**photo 2**). The rapid expansion of Stansted Transit caused difficulties and warning signs emerged when the six new Enviro 200s were repossessed. On 4 June 2009 Stansted Transit went into administration and abruptly ceased. Excel temporarily took over a majority of their 22 routes using vehicles hired from Ensignbus in former liveries and Dawson Rentals in dealer white.

After Essex County Council had re-tendered the routes, Centrebus, who had recently taken over the bus routes of the original Galleon Travel Ltd of Harlow (who traded as Trustline then Trustybus) were awarded the 7/7A routes - the 7A being a loop around Bentfield Green on certain journeys. This commenced on 1 September 2009 and **photo 3** shows Solo 387 smartly turned out in their orange / blue livery at Bishops Stortford. Whilst route 5, awarded to TGM (Stansted) remained stable, the 7/7A changed operator frequently as Centrebus lasted only until 13 February 2011 when it passed to Road Runner and **photo 4** of Dart BU05 HDO, still with its former Abellio name, was taken a few weeks afterwards on the 28th. Incidentally, the 5 is now worked with the 6 as a Bishops Stortford - Stansted Airport - Saffron Walden service which has been operated by Stephenson's since 2013.

Road Runner's tenure lasted just a year and successor TGM Stansted even less at only six months. Then in August 2012 Regal Busways took over. Sadly, by this time standard of presentation had declined as Regal had expanded far and wide, operating from three ill-equipped premises. **Photo 5** of Dart Y258 NLK in scruffy former owner's Metroliner livery with former fleet number was fairly typical of their second-hand acquisitions.



A year later the route operator changed again, to Acme of Molehill Green, although use of elderly Darts continued, as shown in **photo 6** of new to Travel Surrey KN52 NFY at Stansted Airport.

Just short of four years elapsed before Acme, who had been re-awarded routes by Essex C.C., decided to surrender these and Galleon reappeared, again trading as Trustybus. It is common for their buses to operate in as acquired condition and so red, white and blue have appeared but in fairness the electronic displays have been in use, as seen in **photo 7** of Dart SN03 ECA in Solent Blueline livery. Recently, the Trustybus name and yellow flash has been dropped, replaced by Central Connect, and bus livery is now red with blue skirt upswept at rear. Solos seem to be now in favour - AE06 TWN was illustrated in EBN 672. So, quite an eventful 20 years plus of operation.



Photos 1-4 in order, top to bottom previous page. Photo 5-6 in order, left-hand side of this page. Photo 7 right-hand side of this page. All **Owen Woodliffe** except photo 1 **EBEG collection**, photo 2 **Adam Kelleher**

HCT Group TfL Route 20

by **Andrew Colebourne** with thanks to Jonathan Batchelor

Further to my articles in EBNs 676 & 678, and the front cover of the former, BYD / Alexander Dennis Enviro 400EV London-specification demonstrator LF69 UXJ made a return to HCT at Walthamstow (AW) during the last week of January 2021 and re-appeared on route 20 on 12 February, although this was the only date it was recorded on this route. It was used in service spasmodically, as drivers were being trained on it, in preparation for the delivery of HCT's own two electric buses (see below), although it was subsequently recorded on school route 616 (Winchmore Hill - Edmonton Green) each day from 23 to 26 February. It did not appear to have been allocated a fleet number this time round as it continued to appear on LVF as '0e' (last time it was here it was allocated 2601, although this wasn't displayed). By 8 April it had turned up at First's Caledonia, Glasgow depot.

The two new electric Enviro 400EVs were delivered in March, firstly to HCT at Leeds, but they had arrived at Ash Grove by the end of the month. They are numbered 2550e and 2551e (LG21 HZM/N) - numbers (without the 'e') that follow on from the Enviro 400 City hybrids. Seating is H43/24D. They are nominally for the 616 contract but are likely to be used on the 20 as well.

Further to EBN 681, from January 2021 Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus, BJ11 DVX, on loan from Ensignbus to HCT, had only been used in service on Underground replacement services until March (due to school closures). This was one of the buses loaned by Ensignbus to First Essex at Basildon for the Autumn School Term last year. On 9 March (the day after schools returned), it was used as a route 20 extra and on ordinary service D6 and then subsequently it seemed to have settled into the routine of doing this school extra on route 20 out to Debden and back in the morning and then the 616 in the afternoon. Although it had HCT Group fleet names applied it did not display its fleet number 2602 (which follows on from 2601 noted above). It had HK (Ash Grove) garage codes but was operating from AW (Walthamstow Avenue). A photo is on the inside rear cover. As reported on page 23, it has now been replaced by Wrightbus StreetDeck SN64 CTV, former Go-Ahead London WSD1, also on loan from Ensignbus.

Braintree Bus Park 1932-2020

by Nigel Turner

Part 3 - 1934 - 1971

Part 1 appeared in EBN 676 and Part 2 in EBN 678

As in other places, the 1930s saw consolidation of operators serving Braintree. Eastern National acquired the Halstead business of Bird Motor Services in December 1933 together with its frequent service to Braintree. This was followed by the Horn Motor Coach Company of Braintree on 24 August 1935 which gave Eastern National its first depot in the town (in Rayne Road) together with a stage service to Great Bardfield and an express service to London.

Unsurprisingly, little information is available about the operations of the Bus Park during the war. The usual reductions in late evening and Sunday morning journeys occurred in line with the rest of the country. One change that occurred shortly after the end of the war was that Hicks Bros finally moved their terminus from their depot 'Hicks Bus Station' into the Bus Park. Unlike the arguments in earlier times, it doesn't seem to have been covered by the local press, the only mention being in a letter to the editor of the Essex Chronicle published on 15 March 1946 which congratulated the company on the move. The exact date of the change isn't documented but must have been after the publication of Hicks' timetable dated 28 January 1946. A follow up letter reminded readers of those earlier disputes and looked forward to the day when he hoped there would be a "publicly owned TOWN bus service". Sadly, the correspondent had to wait nearly ten years before that came to be.

As built, the only accommodation for passengers was in the brick building which included a covered waiting area at the front, behind which was a waiting room with coal fire. A wartime aerial photograph indicates an unchanged situation, however photos appear in the 5 March and 2 April 1948 issues of 'Commercial Motor' which show that additional shelters had been erected between Stands 6 & 7, and at the far end, next to Stand 12. No doubt, this had been prompted by the increased usage now being made of the Bus Park and consequently the greater income received by the Council in departure fees.

When the Bus Park was built, the Council had ruled out the possibility of a café due to lack of space. However, a public notice appeared on 16 January 1948 inviting caterers to tender for "the tenancy of a mobile canteen, which the Council own on the Bus Park in Victoria Street, for a period of six months for the purpose of retailing light refreshments to 'bus passengers'". It appears that the initial tenant was Reuben Wiffen (his obituary published in 2005 states 1946, probably in error). At any rate, it was clearly a successful operation, as a permanent building was erected in the early 1950s which was tenanted by Mr. Wiffen until 1977.

As yet, I have not found any details of the allocation of departure stands to operators for the early years of the Bus Park. The picture in 'Commercial Motor' of 5 March 1948 shows a board on the centre shelter giving details of six stands but like many similar photos is not clear enough to read the details. Another photo, taken on 30 April 1950, shows two boards, the top one giving details of Eastern National services (stands 1-6) and the bottom one details of Hicks services (stands 7-12). They are in identical style suggesting that they were erected after Hicks came under Eastern National control on 1 January 1950. At this time only the front stands were marked out.

Various photos taken in 1950 enable a picture to be built up of the stand allocation at that time.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Stand 1 | ENOC 312 to Bailey Bridge Road (service introduced 1955) - unfortunately it is not clear from photos which service(s) used Stand 1 in 1950, but possibly Express Service B in the London direction. Once the town service was introduced, then I think all express services used Stand 6 in both directions. |
| Stand 2 | ENOC 23 to Halstead (later 323 and then 311 from 1958) |
| Stand 3 | ENOC 21 to Great Bardfield and Great Sampford (later 321) |
| Stand 4 | Moore's to Colchester |
| Stand 5 | Letch to Heddingham and Great Yeldham. Theobald to Sudbury / Long Melford |
| Stand 6 | Express service B to Halstead, Blackwells to London, Corona to London |
| Stand 7 | Hicks 10 to Bishops Stortford (later ENOC 310) |
| Stand 8 | ENOC 312 to Cressing Road (service introduced 1955) - unfortunately it is also not clear from photos which service(s) used Stand 8 in 1950, but I believe Hicks service 22 to London did. |
| Stand 9 | Hicks 52 to Witham via the Notleys (later ENOC 352) |
| Stand 10 | Hicks 35 to Witham via Silver End (later ENOC 335) |
| Stand 11 | Hicks 15 to Dunmow via Saling & 19 to Wethersfield (later 315 & 319) |
| Stand 12 | Hicks 11 to Chelmsford (later ENOC 311) |

Market day services were operated by Jennings, Pyman and Premier Travel but no allocations to stands are known for the 1950s. A Braintree town service (312) started on Sunday 14 August 1955 and the 335 service to Witham via Silver End was extended to Maldon on the same date.



Above: Stand 5 was used for decades for services to the Hedinghams and Great Yeldham, the initial operator being Aubrey Ernest Letch who had commenced operations around 1919. By the late 1950s he was nearing retirement and clearly not looking to invest more money in his fleet than he had to. November 1958 saw the arrival of KNK 751, a Commer Q4 with Thurgood C33F body new in 1949 to B & B Services of Potten End, Hertfordshire. The chassis was apparently older than the body, so the vehicle probably was from a dealers' bargain basement. The late **John Boylett** took this photo on 6 December 1958 and it is reproduced by kind permission of David Lang of the excellent sct61 website and John Kaye.

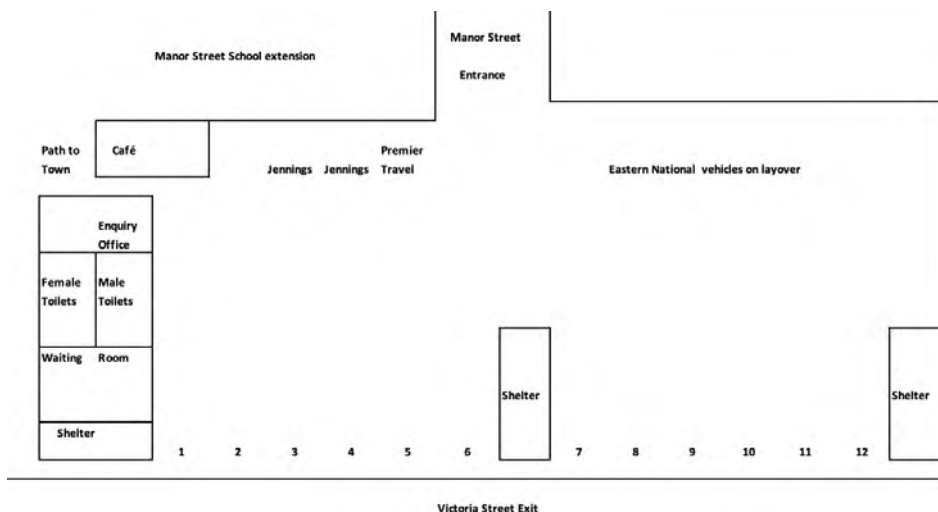
In 1961, the surface of the Bus Park was still the original block paving, but it was resurfaced later in the decade.

A new stand allocation board appeared on the centre shelter by September 1964, and this shows that the situation in the mid 1960s was:

Stand 1	312 Bailey Bridge Road
Stand 2	311 Halstead
Stand 3	352 Great Bardfield (previously numbered 321)
Stand 4	70 Colchester (originally Moores)
Stand 5	325 Halstead (via Stisted) & Hedingham & District 4 to Great Yeldham
Stand 6	322 and X14 to London
Stand 7	70 to Dunmow and Bishops Stortford (previously numbered 310)
Stand 8	312 to Skitts Hill (later 321) & 329 to Felsted (originally Hicks 29)
Stand 9	352 to Witham via Notleys
Stand 10	335 to Maldon via Silver End and Witham
Stand 11	315 to Dunmow via Saling & 319 to Wethersfield / Cornish Hall End
Stand 12	311 to Chelmsford via the main road & 50 to Chelmsford via Terling

The four bays at the rear by the café were used for lay overs by Jennings, Pyman (later Jennings), Premier Travel and Hedingham. On summer Saturdays, Eastern National and United Counties used this area for express service coaches which had a refreshment halt. The area at the rear of stands 7-12 was used for lay overs by ENOC.

By January 1971, a small inspectors' hut had appeared in front of the centre shelter and this had a vehicle allocation board on display which was very interesting to a certain schoolboy who, thanks to a policy change by a new headmaster, was now able to visit the Bus Park in his lunch break! It is believed that the Council operated left luggage / enquiries office ceased at around the time that the inspectors' hut was installed and that in return for the inspectors supervising the Bus Park, the Council ceased to charge Eastern National for departure fees.



Above: The layout of the Bus Park circa 1965 by **Nigel Turner**.

Below: In the late 1950s, Mr. Letch took on a local and very keen bus enthusiast as a part time assistant to help with the administration of the business. He was Donald Robinson MacGregor who, after experience with Eastern National, had gained a degree in Economics, specialising in transport and who clearly had firm views on how to run a bus company. Mr. MacGregor took over the business in June 1960, renamed it 'Hedingham & District' and proceeded to put his ideas into practice. He favoured Gardner engine Bristols for much of the 1960s and here we see L67, RWW 979, an ex-West Yorkshire LS5G with ECW B45F body acquired in November 1969, waiting on Stand 5 to return to Great Yeldham. Most unusually, the route number (4) is not displayed, Mr. MacGregor being strongly of the view that blinds should be correctly set. **Nigel Turner Collection**.





Above: 3969 MPU 30 was a Bristol L5G / ECW DP31R new to Eastern National in 1947. On Sunday 30 April 1950 it is seen at Braintree working a Kings Cross - Halstead journey on Express Service B. Parked in the layover area is one of Hicks' latest pair of Guy Arabs, OVV 756/7 ready to work the 4.20pm Service 22 journey to London. Until the early 1960s, Corona of Acton near Sudbury and Blackwells of Earls Colne also ran express services through Braintree to Kings Cross, a situation that must have surely been unique for a small market town.

Alan B. Cross collection / copyright

To be continued.

Crest Coaches have an office in Rochford but with their operating centre on Collier Row Road in Romford, and currently run four routes to Westcliff High Schools from the London area. Seen here at Westcliff on 18 March 2021 is BD16 YDK, a Volvo B8R with relatively unusual Sunsundegui SB3 body, that was new to Doig's of Glasgow and has recently been acquired by Crest. It has been retrofitted with a side wheelchair lift amidships and destination display for PSVAR compliance. The notice in the windscreen indicates its route as "Coach one", serving Fulwell Cross, Gants Hill and Benton Road in Ilford / Seven Kings. Their website advertises routes to the Westcliff schools from Ilford, Seven Kings, Goodmayes, Chadwell Heath, Romford and Gidea Park, although none appear to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner despite operating at separate fares. Photo by **Matthew Evans**, caption by Richard Delahoy.





Thamesway Leyland National 1894 (BNO 684T) on LRT route 167 at High Street Barkingside on 3 February 1992. **Robert Downton**

Photo Captions

Inside Rear Cover: Routes 20 & 21.

Top: The loan of six Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2s from Ensignbus to First Essex for schools' work in the Autumn 2020 term was reported in EBNs 677 and 679-681. 36156 was illustrated on the rear cover of EBN 678 and 36141 was illustrated in EBN 681. Another of the vehicles on loan was 36153 (BJ11 DVX) and this later moved on to HCT on hire, as reported in EBN 681 and on page 27 of this issue. It is seen at Woodford Green on TfL route 20 on 11 March 2021. By the end of that month, it had returned to Ensignbus and been replaced by StreetDeck SN64 CTV. Further back in the traffic is Go Ahead London WVN21, which also originated with First London, as VN37824, but in that part of the operation that passed to Go Ahead. WVN qualifies as an 'Essex bus' by virtue of having worked school services 608 to Shenfield School and 667 to West Hatch School in Chigwell. In this instance, it had just completed a trip on the 679 to Woodford Wells and was returning to base at River Road. **Andrew Colebourne**

Bottom: Another heritage livery for First Essex, but with a twist. As reported on page 7, FE have acquired 33404 from Worcester which is painted in heritage Midland 'Red' livery. Its use so far has been sporadic due to various issues, but **Richard Delahoy** captured it in Chichester Road, Southend on route 21 on the morning of 6 April 2021.

Rear Cover Top: In contrast to the photo on the front cover, 69421 is seen at Westway on 29 March 2021, in the initial version of the new livery, before the darker green was added at the rear and on the panel beneath the front windscreen. More details on page 8.

Derek Stebbing

Bottom: A rear view of the new livery, on 67162, leaving Mardens for Westway on 31 March.

John G Lidstone with thanks to Max Mckinnon and Gordon Claydon, together with Matt Elsey from First at Chelmsford.



Above Right: Advertising for Southend open-top route 68 at Palmeira Arches bus stop on 29 March 2021. **Richard Delahoy**





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