Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 738 October 2025



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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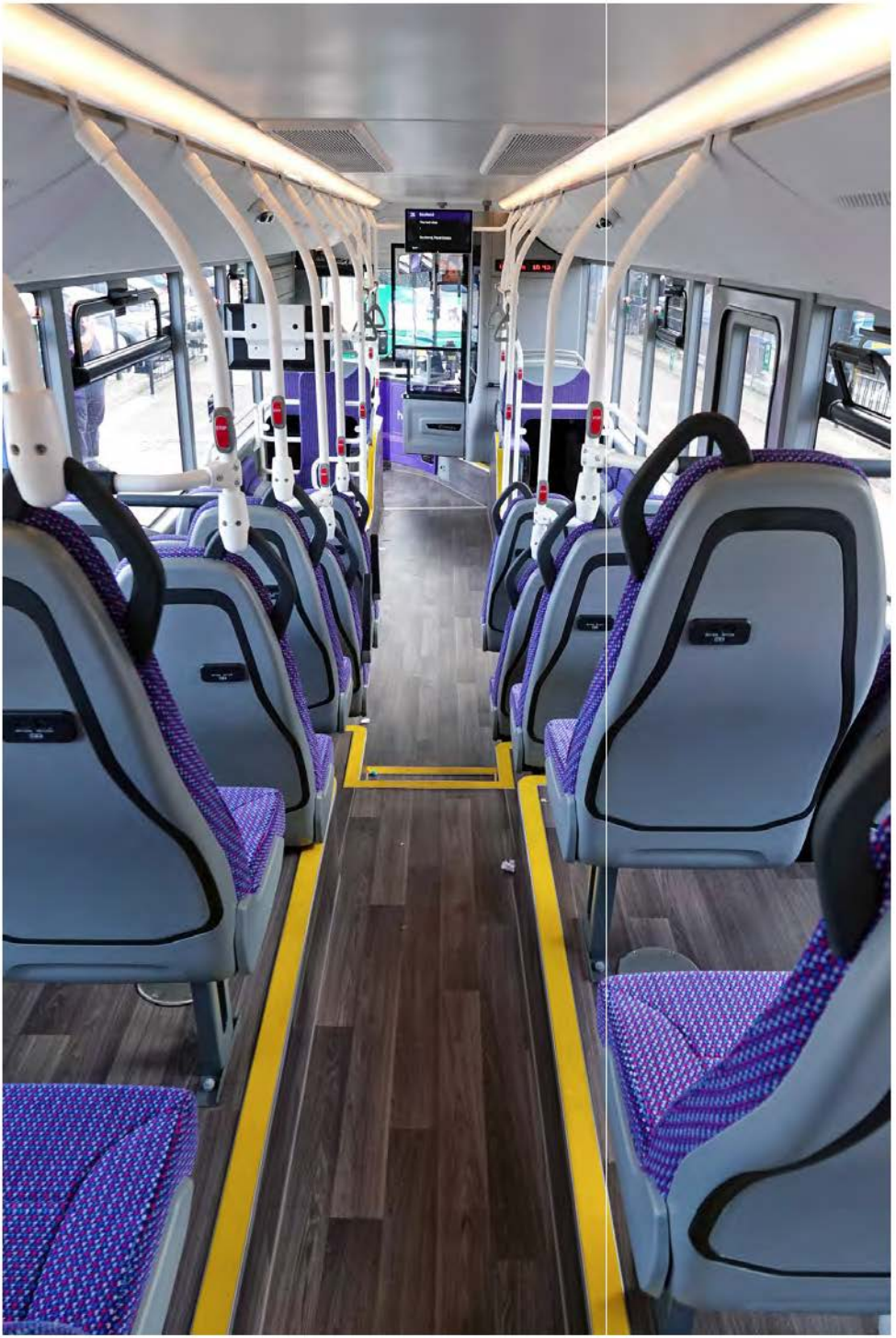

Essex Bus Magazine the journal of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group
Issue 738 October 2025



Above: Strawberry Streamliner Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 364 (MX58 DXS) on Western Esplanade on 17 August 2025, photo taken from the top deck of similar Butterscotch Breezer 367 (MX58 DXZ). Drivers have been instructed to pull up to bus stops across the cycle lane to avoid passengers potentially being mown down by Lycra folk. The Council had promised to mark out cut-in laybys in the cycle lane in 2018/19....still waiting. **John G Lidstone**

Front Cover & Inside Front Cover: The era of First Essex electric buses has begun. Yutong E12 65164 (YB25 VXL) on route 25 at Brooklands Avenue, Eastwood and at Southend Travel Centre (interior photo) on 23 September 2025, its first day of service. (65154 the previous day had been the first electric bus to enter service.) The next stop displays are impressive (note the forward facing one on the left of the photo for wheelchair passengers), better than the single line orange LED displays being retrofitted to older First Essex buses (see page 15).
Both **John G Lidstone**

More photos on pages 18 & 19 and inside rear cover.



Right: View from the top deck of TransBus Enviro 500 368 (68 EB) on route 99 on 27 August 2025. This bus was on loan to Ensignbus from Zero2 Bus Museum. **John G Lidstone**

More details and another photo on page 21.

Group Information

Chair & Meetings Organiser	Ian Ransom
Secretary & Social Meetings Host	Alan Osborne
Treasurer & Membership	Richard Delahoy
Distribution, Publication & Sales	Owen Woodliffe
Publications Co-ordinator	Paul Harvey
Facebook Page Manager	Paul Naylor

ebegfb@outlook.com

Editorial Team

Editor and Arriva, First Essex and Ensignbus
Adam Kelleher
74 Park Road
Brentwood, Essex
CM14 4TU
adamxxxx4@yahoo.co.uk

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

Service Revisions, Stephensons & NIBS and Publicity
Ian Ransom, ianransom2008@googlemail.com
34 Donald Way, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9JE

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

Ipswich Buses in Essex
Robert Appleton, rcappleton29@gmail.com

Central Connect
Chris Stewart, shenfield252@gmail.com

TfL in Essex and Thurrock
Andrew Colebourne, andrewcolebourne@yahoo.co.uk

Printed by
Directcds Ltd, Unit 9c Britannia Estates, Leagrave Road,
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Missing or Defective EBMs
Please contact Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road, Chingford, E4 8PT
owen_woodliffe@hotmail.com
Owen stocks a wide range of colour photos, please send an SAE for details.

Subscriptions
The calendar year subscription for 2025 is £29 for printed copies sent by post, or £20 for electronic pdf copies sent by e-mail. New members may join from any month, but subscriptions will always run to December from whichever month the member chooses, please ask for the relevant price.
Please contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 3TT
richard.delahoy@blueyonder.co.uk

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

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

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

Target Dates for EBM 739

Reports to Sub-Editors	**18 October**
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	**24 October**
Dispatch by Printers on or before	**1 November**

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 25th and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the next month.

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

Group Notices

Membership Renewals for 2026

We are pleased to invite you to renew your subscription for 2026. Our costs continue to increase, with further postal increases likely, but we remain conscious of the cost of living pressures faced by many readers. Accordingly, the Committee have decided to raise subs by just £1, covering any resultant losses from our reserves, so the rate for 2026 will be £30 for printed copies sent by post and £21 for pdf copies sent by e-mail. Your subscription covers 12 issues of EBM plus the Extras which are generously funded by individual members; we expect to publish two such Extras in 2026.

We have been pleased with the take up of the electronic only membership option and hope this will continue. Under this option you will receive a pdf copy of the magazine by e-mail as each issue is published instead of a printed copy. Electronic copies go out on the earliest day that we expect Royal Mail to deliver the physical copies to the rest of the membership, so that everyone gets their EBM at about the same time each month. This option costs £21 for a full year, including the Extras, and will save you having to find space to store printed magazines and will also help anyone with an unreliable postal service. Existing members taking the print version can opt to go onto the electronic system immediately or from January 2026 if you wish, just let me know.

A renewal slip will be included in the envelope with November's EBM for those receiving the magazine by post. Our bank has recently started charging us a whopping 70p to process every cheque we pay in. If you wish to pay by cheque please return the slip with your payment, however we strongly prefer payment by direct bank transfer as set out on the slip, as there is no cost to us or to you. There's no need to let us know you've paid, we check the bank account daily for payments, but if you do want to transfer to the pdf option, please confirm this by e-mail, to ensure that we have your correct e-mail address. All members for whom we hold an e-mail address will also receive a renewal reminder by e-mail.

Many thanks for your continued support of EBEG and in due course I look forward to receiving your renewal - ideally by bank transfer!

Richard Delahoy, Membership Secretary / Treasurer

Group Meetings

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

Main Meetings

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

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

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

We are looking for volunteers to present slide shows (slide or USB) at our bi-monthly Chelmsford meetings from February 2026 onwards. Something lasting approximately 90 minutes, but we can always have a couple of presentations at the same event if you're able to present something that may fill 45 minutes or so. If you're able to help, please contact Ian Ransom, details on page 2 under 'Service Revisions, etc.'

Social Meetings

Thursday afternoons **16 October**, **20 November** and **18 December**.

At **'The Globe' Public House, Rainsford Road, CM1 2QL**, 1300 (lunch, optional) for 1400 (start of meeting) to 1700.

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

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

Group members are also invited to attend a presentation by Bill Hiron, Omnibus Society President for 2025, at the **Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford CM1 1LN** (just round the corner from the stations), on **Saturday 29 November 2025**, 1400 for 1430.

The Running Card

Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Sunday 19 October: Transport Festival. London Bus Museum, Brooklands KT13 0QS
Saturday / Sunday 25/26 October: Halloween Event. East Anglian Transport Museum, Carlton Colville NR33 8BL.
Saturday 1 November: Aldenham Spectacular. Allum Hall, 2 Allum Road, Elstree WD3 6PJ.
Saturday 15 November: Enfield Transport Bazaar. St Stephens Church Hall, Village Road EN1 2EY.
Sunday 16 November: Camden Town Transport Event. Vintage London buses on several routes.
Saturday 6 December: Zero2 Bus Museum opens at Poole Farm, Poole Street, Great Yeldham CO9 4HP. Also open Sunday 7th and for every subsequent December weekend. Route 721 link from Braintree Railway Station when museum is open.
Saturdays / Sundays 6/7 December, 13/14 December and 20/21 December: Ride the Lights. East Anglia Transport Museum. Carlton Colville NR33 8BL. 1500 to 1900.
Sunday 7 December: Christmas Cracker. Ipswich Transport Museum, Cobham Road IP3 9JD.

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

Local Transport Grant

The Local Transport Grant (LTG) is a UK Government initiative providing £2.3 billion in funding to Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) for smaller cities, towns and rural areas which do not receive City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) or Transport for City Regions (TCR) funding, to improve infrastructure and services. Starting from 2026/27, it consolidates previous funding streams to support projects like road maintenance, bus improvements and cycling infrastructure, aiming to make journeys more reliable and support economic growth. New zero-emission buses are among the areas where LTG allocations could be spent, alongside improvements to accessibility, reducing congestion and making streets safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

LTG brings together the Integrated Transport Block and Local Transport Grant. This simplified, long-term and consolidated funding aims to enable local authorities to deliver more ambitious transport projects.
Total capital funding of £2,188m has been allocated for the next four years from 2026/27.
Essex LTA will receive £6.77m (26/27), £10.325m (27/28), £14.149m (28/29) and £17.973m (29/30), total £49.217m.
Southend-on-Sea LTA will receive £1.55m (26/27), £2.63m (27/28), £3.604m (28/29) and £4.577m (29/30), total £12.361m.
Thurrock LTA will receive £1.09m (26/27), £2.456m (27/28), £3.365m (28/29) and £4.275m (29/30), total £11,186m.

£104m of the £2.3 billion is resource funding which will enable LTAs to develop detailed plans for local schemes funded out of LTG capital funding while also allowing those bodies to manage the delivery of those capital projects. This has only been allocated for three years, not four, from 2026/27. Of the £104m, Essex LTA has been allocated £1.08m per year over the three years, Southend-on-Sea LTA £237k per year over the three years and Thurrock £235k per year over the three years.

It is assumed that the allocations to Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock will be consolidated as Greater Essex becomes one LTA under local government reorganisation.

Michael Dryhurst

We are very sorry to record the death of the well-known enthusiast and early bus preservationist, Michael Dryhurst, on 9 September at the age of 87. Although not an EBEG member, his name will be known to many readers through his contributions to Classic Bus magazine amongst others, whilst those somewhat older than your scribe may recall how he wrote the London column for early issues of Buses Illustrated magazine under the nom de plume V H Darling, as well as some early Ian Allan books. He generously supplied the Group with photos with an Essex connection, as used in EBM and EBM Extras; we still have plenty to use. He would e-mail me with copies of these photos and also obscure queries about local buses, such as which Westcliff double-deckers had roof box number blinds. He would sometimes sign off e-mails with quirky names, including Ill Ford, Rittle Street, Billy Riccay, Felix Stowe, Jay Enn (a play on the Southend registration letters JN), Basil Don, Ray Leigh and Ben Fleet - oh, and yes, sometimes just Michael! I only ever met him once, when he was on one of his trips to the UK and he took a stall at a Canvey Museum rally one October to sell photos; I recall afterwards his disappointment at how few wallets were open that day!

In the early days of ENEG we included coverage of Ipswich Corporation, and still do for Ipswich Buses operations in Essex, so rather than selecting an Essex photo for this short tribute, I have chosen the **below** rather splendid shot that Michael took of an Ipswich trolleybus, nicely also illustrating some of the overhead wiring. 117 (ADX 187) was a Sunbeam F4 with Park Royal H30/26R body, new in 1950 as part of the final batch of Ipswich trolleybuses, 115-26 (of which 119-26 later ran in Walsall). Displaying the classic Electric House destination, it is just approaching that terminus, having turned into Tower Street from Crown Street. Behind is the car showroom of Egertons, a building still standing today. We offer our condolences to Michael's family and many friends in the bus enthusiast fraternity.

Richard Delahoy



Ownership Changes

Major news this month is that it was announced on Monday 22 September 2025 that Go Ahead were selling their East Anglia division to Transport Made Simple, effective from the Wednesday of the following week, 1 October. This comprises Konectbus, Norfolk and Konectbuses, Essex & Sussex. As previously reported, the latter was only officially rebranded from Hedingham & Chambers from 1 June this year with a new livery for both companies being introduced (ironically light blue and dark blue like TMS, although different shades).

On a much smaller scale, Ensignbus has acquired Keane Coaches, see page 20 for more detail.

Next Stop Announcements

Following on from EBM 727 (November 2024), a recap and additional information.

Following the introduction of the Public Service Vehicles (Accessible Information) Regulations 2023 (the Accessible Information Regulations), between 2024 and 2026 it will become mandatory for the majority of local bus and coach services to incorporate accessible information provision (which is to provide audible announcements and visual displays identifying the route and direction, each upcoming stop, and the beginning of any diversions), improving the journey experience for all passengers, including passengers who are disabled. The regulations are intended to result in all passengers having access to high-quality and accurate on-board information whenever they travel on local bus and coach services.

These regulations were introduced on 30 March 2023. At that time, there was patchy provision across the country, with only 30% of buses outside London providing this information, the lack of which can be a major barrier for disabled people wanting to travel by bus or coach. Clear audible and visible information also benefits non-disabled passengers, helping those who are travelling on an unfamiliar bus route to alight at their correct stop. The aids will include ensuring audio is available through induction loop systems, and all new vehicles introduced after October 2024 must also include visible information which can be seen by a wheelchair user when travelling in a rearward facing wheelchair space.

In EBM 727 we reported that all vehicles registered after 1 October 2019 were required to have displays and announcements by 1 October 2024, with a deadline of 1 October 2026 for all remaining vehicles. This wasn't fully correct; there is an additional deadline that we missed - all vehicles first used between 1 October 2014 and 30 September 2019 are required to have these by 1 October 2025.

Omnibus Society Booklet



Eastern Transport Holdings is the parent company of Stephensons of Essex and NIBS buses. Chairman of the company is Bill Hiron MBE, and this year he is President of the Omnibus Society. In recognition of that, and to coincide with the society's Presidential Weekend, a booklet has been produced which includes fully detailed current fleet lists supported by histories of both operating companies, along with 25 photos showing some of the vehicles operated over the years and some illustrations of ephemera used. The booklet is A5, 36 pages.
The OS is very grateful for all the assistance given by EBEG members in producing the booklet and, in return, is offering copies to EBEG members at the OS price of £5.00 (£6.00 by post). Copies can be ordered from David Grimmett (e-mail david.grimmett@omnibus-society.org with payment being made by bank transfer - details will be supplied) or in person at the 18 October EBEG meeting in Chelmsford.

Below: Stephensons and NIBS Mini Enviro 200 MMCs together at Brentwood Station on 22 September 2025. 311 (YW25 DFU) in front operating NIBS route 71, 302 (YX16 OBR) behind, recently renumbered from 402, was on route 565. **Adam Kelleher**



Follow Ups

EBM 736 - Other Operators



The weather at the London Cart Marking ceremony at the Guildhall on 19 July 2025 was very wet, as seen in the photo of Lodge Coaches Bedford OB LTA 752 in EBM 736 (and also the one of Stephensons Bristol VR XHK 234X in EBM 737). Despite the weather, the individual nearside window panels of the OB were being stowed in the boot so that side was open for the ceremony itself, as seen in the photo **below** in Gresham Street before the coach moved forward to Guildhall Yard and **above** as the coach was leaving Guildhall. The offside windows were left in place.

Both **Andrew Colebourne**



EBM 737 - Across Essex in Two REs

On this tour, on 9 August 2025, amongst other routes partially recreated was route 19, which in its heyday operated from Southend through to Colchester and Clacton. 1546 (SVW 274K), illustrated last month in Jackson Road, Clacton, albeit blinded for route 53, was, together with sister 1547 (SVW 275K), used on the last day of the 19 on Saturday 15 January 1983, which was by then Southend Victoria Bus Station to Maldon Bus Station. 1546 is seen **above right** on that day in Maldon Bus Station.



Right: 1547 on 15 January 1983 in London Road, between Rawreth Carpenters Arms and Rayleigh Station. Both REs were borrowed by Southend from Hadleigh, 1547 has HH depot plates, 1546 does not have depot plates.



Right: Three months later, and 1547 operated Hadleigh depot's last RE journey on Saturday 16 April 1983. It is seen on route 24A in Rayleigh Road approaching the junction of the London Road roundabout, Hadleigh Victoria House Corner, Eastern National (now First Essex) depot next stop.



All **Paul Harvey**

738 for EBM 738



Further to '737 for EBM 737' last month, another Eastern Counties / First Essex connection. Dennis Lance / Northern Counties Paladin K**738** JAH was new to Eastern Counties as S38 in February 1993. It was acquired by Essex Buses in December 1999 and given fleet number 1518. Like sister 1517 illustrated last month, it received Eastern National Anglia livery and branding for routes 31/ X. It is seen **right** on the 31X in Chelmsford Bus Station 25 April 2000. In July 2003 it was repainted into Barbie 2 livery and in March 2004 it was renumbered 67038 in the national Sema scheme. In July 2005 it was converted to a Driver Trainer. In the photo **below**, taken at Colchester Bus Station on 25 July 2008, remnants of its previous fleet number can be seen just above its current one. It went to Erith Commercials for scrap in December 2009, 10 years after being acquired.

Both **Robert Appleton**



BBC Radio 2 Party in the Park 2025

This was held at Hylands Park, Chelmsford over the weekend of 6-7 September. Shuttle buses ran from Coval Lane to the event. There may have been services operated on the evening of **Friday 5** but, unfortunately, we did not receive any reports. Over the weekend, vehicles noted were as follows. This is thought to be quite a comprehensive list, but there may possibly have been other vehicles not spotted.

Saturday 6th: **Ensignbus** 101 (SN18 KSO), 102 (SL69 XWU), 129 (LX15 GOU); **First Essex**: 33657 (CF), 33687 (CR), 33713 (CR), 33714 (CF), 33981/6/8/992 (BN), 33994-6 (CF), 36840 (CF), 37126 (CF); **Central Connect** 502 (YX24 PLU), 503 (YX24 PLV), 504 (YY74 OBM), 505 (YY74 OBN), 507 (YY74 OBP), 509 (YY74 OBS); **REL Davian** M77 FXO; **BorderBus** 214 (BB60 BUS), 215 (BB74 BUS), 216 (YT59 SFO), 217 (BB22 BUS), 218 (BB74 BUS).

Sunday 7th daytime: **First Essex** 33696 (BN), 33986, 33994-6, 34424-6 (CF); **Central Connect** 505, 507, 508 (YY74 OBR), 509; **BorderBus** 214, 216-218; **Sanders** Enviro 400 MMCs 130 (HM24 SAN), 132 (TJ24 TJH).

Sunday 7th late evening after 2200 (complete list): **First Essex** 33986, 33994/6, 34424-6; **Central Connect** 505/7-9; **BorderBus** 214, 216-8.

With thanks to Dale Bell and Colin Sigston.



Right: BorderBus 214 (BB60 BUS) turning from Rainsford Road into Coval Lane on a return trip from Hylands Park on 6th. This is a Scania N230UD OmniCity acquired in October 2020 from Ipswich Buses, new to First London (YR61 RVA). 216 is also an OmniCity (ex-London United). 215, 217 and 218 are Enviro 400 MMCs.



Right: First Essex Enviro 400 33687 (SN12 AFX), allocated to Colchester, waits in Coval Lane before picking up passengers to take them to Hylands Park also on 6th. Behind is REL Davian M77 FXO, a VDL / Berkhof Axial, ex-Felixstowe Travel, new to Bus Eireann.

Both **Dale Bell**

Service Revisions

Ian Ransom

23 August 2025
375 (M-S) Romford Station - Passingford Bridge Roundabout **Arriva London**. Due to ongoing traffic delays in the area as a result of the closure of the roundabout at Gallows Corner for flyover replacement works, temporarily revised to operate between Collier Row Roundabout and Passingford Bridge with a revised timetable.
Arriva London 175 maintained a connection between Romford Station and Collier Row.

31 August
351 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Warley, Eagle Way **First Essex**. Further to last month, additional commercial journeys (not BSIP funded) also introduced on Saturdays. 1535 & 1810 Chelmsford - Warley (giving a later last bus on Saturdays) and 0705 & 0933 from Warley, with the 1640 ex Brentwood Station revised to start from Warley at 1635.

2 September
602 (Sch only) Witham, Old Police Station - Great Baddow High School **Stephensons**. Revised route and timetable, no longer serves Little Baddow.
C1 (Sch Only) Wivenhoe, Rectory Road - Brightlingsea Colne Community College **Stephensons**. Revised route and timetable, extended to start from and terminate at Wivenhoe, The Flag.
C4 (Sch Only) Frating, Kings Arms - Brightlingsea, Colne Community College **Stephensons**. Revised route and timetable, extended to start from and terminate at Frating Rectory Cottages.

3 September
BB4 (Sch Only) Ware - Bishop's Stortford, St Marys School **Barker Bus**. Revised to operate from Harlow BP Garage Southern Way to St Marys School, via Sawbridgeworth (closed school contract).

20 September
375 (M-S) Romford Station - Passingford Bridge Roundabout **Arriva London** Service between Romford Station and Passingford Bridge returned to full route (despite the continuing closure of the roundabout at Gallows Corner).
721 (S, Su, BH Only) Braintree Railway Station - Great Yeldham, Zero2 Bus Museum **Great Yeldham Buses**. Operates in conjunction with open days. Further to last month, introduction deferred beyond 20 September as museum has ongoing building work. Now planned to commence on 6 December when the museum opens. The museum will then be open all weekends in December.

With thanks to the Omnibus Society.

Right: Last month we reported that from the start of the Autumn term, First Eastern Counties would be operating new college services to the Suffolk One Sixth Form College, Ipswich. Those partly within Essex are O4 Colchester, Stanway and O6 Harwich, to the college. Here is Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 2 69547 in Southway, Colchester on 9 September 2025 on the O4. The bus is in heritage Eastern Counties privatisation livery and carries traditional style fleet number VW547. **John Podgorski**



Next Stop Announcements

Further to the report last month of Harlow's StreetLite 1660 (GN64 DXX) having been fitted with audio and visual next stop announcements and previous reports of these being fitted to Southend's Enviro 400 MMCs, all vehicles new since October 2014 should now have these fitted and in use. See page 6 for more details.

Colchester

Transfers In & Out

Enviro 200 4063 (GN59 FVE) was collected from Northfleet on 13 September 2025 and entered service here on 15th. It is in old turquoise 'cow horns' livery.

VDL DB300 / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 4463 (MX61 AYB) was received on loan from Southend on 2 September.

Further to EBM 736, VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsar 3756 (YJ08 DZF), which was withdrawn from service during June 2025, has moved to Southend for storage before going for scrap.

PVR

Following the service changes from the end of August 2025, the current PVR for each route is as follows:
1/3 eleven; 2 three; 8 nine. Park & Ride can run with three but the fourth is used as a ferry vehicle.
Total 26, allocation of 30, but P&R vehicles are not used on normal services so only three spare.

Harlow

Acquired Vehicles

4137, YW68 PFD, ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMC, B41F, new to LandFlight, Solihull February 2019

Acquired from LandFlight. Entered service on 26 September 2025 in fleet livery. This is the vehicle 'missing' last month, and completes the ex LandFlight quartet 4137-4140 (YW68 PFD/F/J/K). After entering service in acquired all white, 4138 and 4140 were quickly repainted into fleet livery, so all four are now in Arriva livery. As well as 4140 reported last month, 4139 also has seatbelts, so it is assumed the other two do as well.

Transfers In & Out

Optare Versa V1110 4243 (KX13 DHN) was received from Hemel Hempstead on Sunday 14 September and entered service here the next day. It is in standard light blue livery.

At the same time, Optare Solo Slimline 1517 (YJ07 VPY) moved to Hemel Hempstead in exchange (this was the only SL version at Harlow).

Optare Solo 1458 (KE04 PZG) then also moved to Hemel Hempstead, its last day at Harlow was Saturday 20 September. But after entering service on 23rd, it broke down twice and was withdrawn for scrap on 24th.

ADL Enviro 200 4010 (YX61 FZD) entered service from Harlow on Wednesday 24 September, transferred from Ware where it had last worked on 22nd. It is in standard light blue livery.

Wrightbus StreetLite DF 4301 (GN15 CWX) is also a transfer from Ware. Its last day in service there was on 23 September and it entered service from Harlow the next day. This vehicle is significant as it is in London Country heritage livery, light green with yellow band.

Further to last month, Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 3882 (KX11 PVD) was towed to Stevenage on 16 September.

Also further to last month, see Southend report below for an update on 4232.

Disposals
Last month we reported that Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 3820 (GN07 AVG) was towed away for scrap on 7 August. It went to A. Hardwick. In EBM 735 we reported that DAF SB10 / Wrightbus Cadet Driver Trainer T941 (GK52 YVF) had been withdrawn. That also went to A. Hardwick for scrap around the same time.

Fleet List
The current Harlow fleet is:
Optare Solo 1457 (the last vehicle in old livery)
Optare Solo SR 1519
Wrightbus StreetLite WF 1660, 1661
Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 3889 (withdrawn from service)
ADL Enviro 200 4004, 4010
ADL Enviro 200 MMC 4076, 4078, 4081, 4083, 4084, 4085, 4086, 4087, 4095, 4096, 4101, 4103, 4104, 4105, 4106, 4107, 4108, 4109, 4110, 4111, 4112, 4113, 4120, 4135, 4136, 4137, 4138, 4139, 4140, 4141
Optare Versa 4183, 4184, 4217, 4230, 4231, 4238, 4239, 4243
Wrightbus StreetLite DF 4301

Southend

Transfers In & Out
As noted above, 4463 went to Colchester on loan on 2 September 2025. Optare Versa V1110 2955 (YJ61 MHY) was received at the same time from Tunbridge Wells to replace it. It is in standard light blue livery and entered service here on 10th.

Also as reported above, 3756 from Colchester for storage (destined to go for scrap).

Last month we reported that Optare Versa 4232 (KX62 JWG) moved from Harlow to Southend in August for onward disposal. However, it entered service from Southend on 11 September.

Also, 4038 was included in the list of vehicles stored for disposal. In fact, this was at Southend for maintenance and is now back in service at its home depot Colchester.

Further to last month, Optare Versa 2405 (YJ58 PFX), transferred in from Ware, entered service on 1 September 2025. It is seen **below** the next day on route 7 at Rayleigh Station. **Nigel Clark**



With thanks to John Card, Nigel Clark, Richard Delahoy, Nicholas King, John Lidstone, William Morrison, John Podgorski, Keith Sadler, Steve Thompson, Harlowride and LOTS.

New Vehicles
30114 (YK75 LLU)
Yutong U11DD. Delivered to Basildon on 19 September 2025.

65141 (YK75 LJA), 65143 (YK75 LJE), 65148 (YK75 LJO), 65159 (YK75 LKG), 65165 (YK75 LKP), 65167 (YK75 LKV)
Yutong E12. Delivered to Basildon on 22 September (65148 & 65165), 25th (65159 & 65167), 26th or 27th (65141 & 65143).

The new era of electric buses had a very low key introduction when 65154 entered service on route 100 on 22 September. 65164 on route B3 and 65165 on route 300 followed the next day. 65148 on route B1 on 24th, 65159 on X10 on 25th, 65167 on X10 on 26th and 65149 on 25 on 27th.

Most, if not all, Yutongs were delivered to Olive Grove, Sheffield depot from Pelican Bus & Coach for testing before moving to Basildon. For example, 65148, 65158, 65159, 65165 and 65167 were all seen there on 2 September and 30105 on 24th. Fleet names and other decals are normally applied at Olive Grove. The three 25-reg E12s, 65149, 65154 and 65164 arrived without these. These have now been fitted locally. The sole Yutong U11DD delivered so far is also without these.

Acquired Vehicles

33806	YX63 LJL	SFD4DSBRFDGX37473	D419/4	H41/26F	09/13	First Eastern Counties

E40D / Enviro 400. Acquired from First Eastern Counties (Great Yarmouth) on 26 September 2025.
In FEC 'Coastlink' yellow and two tone blue livery (in Urban 2 style). New for FEC Excel services and are to high spec, as described in relation to sisters 33805 and 33811 in last month's EBM.

Further to last month, 33811 left Mardens after repainting into corporate livery (with fleet names and other decals) on the morning of 2 September and entered service on roues X70 and 570 that afternoon. At first, only the top of its destination display was in use without vias, but it has since had the blinds reprogrammed to show vias at the top and the destination below. Like other recently acquired vehicles from First Eastern Counties (including 67760 below) it has a non-standard nearside route number. There is no further news on 33805 since last month.

67760	SN62 AUC	SFD1C8AR2CGG30734	C312/10	B41F	02/13	First Glasgow (Number 1)

E30D / Enviro 300. Acquired from First Eastern Counties (Ipswich) on 6 September 2025. In blue Ipswich Park & Ride livery. Entered service on route C1 on the afternoon of 9th. It is seen **opposite** on route 71 at The George, Witham on 11 September 2025. **Dave Arnold**

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 5 2025/26 (27 July - 23 August) - additional to EBM 737
65149 New-BN (oos), 65154 New-BN (oos), 65164 New-BN (oos)

Period 6 2025/26 (24 August - 27 September)
30114 New-BN (oos), 33424 BN-CF, 33507 BN-Disposal, 33567 BN-Disposal, 33705 CF-CF (oos), 33806 FG-CF (oos), 33811 CF (oos)-CF, 33995 CF (oos)-CF, 33996 CF-BN, 34465 HH (oos)-HH, 44660 CF-CF (oos), 47602 CF-CF (oos), 47644 BN-HH, 47647 HH-FG, 47648 HH-FG, 47669 CR-BN, 63329 CR-BN, 63331 CR-BN, 63333 CR-CR (oos), 65141 New-BN (oos), 65143 New-BN (oos), 65148 New-BN, 65149 BN (oos)-BN, 65154 BN (oos)-BN, 65159 New-BN, 65164 BN (oos)-BN, 65165 New-BN, 65167 New-BN, 67164 CF-CF (oos), 67760 FG-CF, 67779 CF (oos)-CF

47669, 63329 and 63331 moved temporarily from Colchester to Basildon on 31 August to replace the three Enviro 400s withdrawn from service, as reported last month (33504, 33551 and 33552). Service cuts at Colchester made them surplus there. 47669 is still in Southampton City Red livery.



Above: 67760 (SN62 AUC), details on previous page.

Disposals
6 September 2025: 47647 to First Eastern Counties at Lowestoft.
23 September: 33507 removed from Basildon by PVS for scrap.
24 September: 33567 removed from Basildon by PVS for scrap.
26 September: 47648 to First Eastern Counties at Lowestoft.

Further to EBM 734, fire damaged 44081 was disposed of through LJ Transportation, Chelmsford (dealers) in May 2025.

Repaints
33811 - see 'Acquired Vehicles' above.

Further to previous reports, 63343, which did not previously have vinyls had them added (between February and August 2025).

Next Stop Announcements
Further to page 6, the additional First Essex vehicles that need to have these fitted to meet the 1 October 2025 deadline are: StreetLites 47482-3/521-30, 63161-70 (64 reg), 47630/3/43-4/6/9-58/665-9 (15 reg), 63312/29/31/3-44 (65 reg), 63370/2-3/5/81/3 (16 reg); Enviro 400 MMCs 33981/3-9/91-2/94-98 (65 reg), 34421-6 (17 reg); Enviro 200 MMCs 44659-62, 67161/3-5/7-9/71/89-97 (66 reg).

Over the last few months single line orange LED screens have been fitted to those buses in the list that did not already have them, although they were not yet in operation on journeys taken by the Editor in September.

New Ticketer Machines
These were introduced from Sunday 14 September 2025. They have a bigger screen (more like a small tablet), issue tickets quicker and are generally more responsive.

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

Colchester
37135 (RTC damage) was the only vehicle on the scrap line on 30 August although 33674 was parked nearby and appeared to be engineless, presumably it is waiting a replacement engine. 37135 was still there on 18 September but on 25th was towed to Westway depot, Chelmsford for evaluation.

The service revisions of 31 August 2025 brought a revised timetable for 102/104 on Mondays to Fridays, with the 1655 and 1725 Colchester - Harwich journeys replaced by one at 1710. In addition, the 1235, 1335, 1440 Colchester - Harwich journeys were put back by five minutes, enabling buses to do more journeys on the 104. For example, the bus on 0935 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1110 return continues on 1240 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1420 return. Thus the Monday - Friday school day timetable is now worked by seven buses, with less interworking on other routes. In the previous school term it required twelve buses.

Further to last month, the closure of Colchester Road, Lawford continued until 11 September. Therefore routes 102/104 remained single deck operated even when Colchester schools started their new school terms on 2 September. Also, pupils from Manningtree High School on Colchester Road, Lawford had to walk to Lawford Place or Manningtree to catch a 104 bus. ADL Enviro 200 MMCs also worked on 102/104 during early September: 67189 (2nd, 4th) 67190 (1st), 67197 (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 9th).

Below: StreetLite 47483 (SN64 CNU) turning from Cox's Hill, Lawford to regain its normal route, working 1420 Harwich - Colchester 104 on 3 September. **Robert Appleton**



Colchester Road reopened on time during 11 September. The first double-decker to work again on 104 was nothing less than the sole remaining Volvo B7TL, 32673, in Remembrance livery, which worked 1550 Colchester, Norman Way Schools - Harwich, 1745 return to Stanwell Street, then 1910 Colchester - Wix.

In the week commencing 15 September, the seven buses on 102/104 were split between three double-deckers and four single-deckers. The double-deck duties were:
1) 0720 Harwich - Colchester 104, 0935 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1110 return, 1240 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1420 return, 1613 Colchester North Station - Great Notley 320.
2) 0630 Colchester - West Mersea 55, 0718 West Mersea - Colchester, Norman Way Schools 55, 0835 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1010 return, 1520 St Helena School - Barnhall Estate, Napier Road 16A, 1610 Colchester - Maldon 75 & 1735 return.
3) 0630 Colchester - Maldon 75 & 0735 return, 0905 Colchester - Maldon 75 & 1015 return, 1132 Colchester - West Mersea 55 & 1222 return, 1305 Colchester - Maldon 75 & 1415 return, 1550 Colchester Norman Way Schools - Harwich 104 & 1745 return (to Colchester Bus Station), 1910 Colchester - Wix 104.
Examples of the seven buses on 102/104:
15 September: 33671, 33689, 33718, 47658, 63334, 63336, 63341.
16 September: 32673. 37136, 37140, 47461, 69517, 69518, 69519.
17 September: 33680, 33692, 37138, 47421, 47430, 47461, 47668.

47667 (2nd), 63312 (8th), 63335 (10th), 63344 (9th), 67197 (4th), 69516 (12th) and 69517 (5th) single-deckers on 320. 67197 (5th) single-decker on 372.

On 27th, as part of the Omnibus Society's Presidential Weekend, attendees visited Quayside Depot where there was a display of heritage buses and vehicles from other depots, including Basildon's new Yutong E12 65164.

Chelmsford
33705 on route 372 got stuck under Duke Street railway bridge on 20 August when the driver turned right instead of left when exiting the bus station. However, it did not lose its roof, and when seen at Westway Depot on 2 September it looked surprisingly little damaged. The only damage was to the top deck front window, which is smashed on its nearside, but the roof line is distorted in that area, by being pushed in slightly, with the window starting to pop out. That distortion may be enough to seal its fate if it has weakened the structural integrity of the vehicle. It was still in the same place on 16th.

33996 transferred to Basildon on 3rd (the start of the new school term), with heritage Eastern National NBC liveried 33424 being received in exchange. 33424 is longer (and lower) with 80 seats compared to the 74 of 33996, so it is useful for school services. 33996 suits BN as that depot's allocation of diesel buses, once all the electrics are in service, will be mainly Enviro MMCs.

33656 (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 11th & 16th), 33657 (5th & 8th) and 33730 (1st & 2nd) unusual non MMC Enviro 400s on X30. 69432 very unusual on X30 (6th).

Basildon
63329 is on the scrap line and has been partly cannibalised. It has been out of service since January this year.

Out of service 33985 is at ADL Harlow for RTC damage repairs.

Hadleigh's 34461 on 300 (6th), covering for BN buses being used on Party in the Park shuttles.
63170 a long StreetLite on 9 (24th).

Ipswich & Lowestoft (First Eastern Counties)
First Eastern Counties took over the Ipswich Park & Ride service 800 from Ipswich Buses on 3 July 2017, it is tendered by Suffolk County Council. The basic route is Copdock, London Road - Ipswich Town Centre - Martlesham. Frequency was every 15 minutes, plus a new addition was an hourly extension to Rendlesham, but this was later withdrawn, replaced by extending Ipswich - Melton service 65 to there.

Seven ADL Enviro 300s came from First Scotland East for this service: 67752/60/63/73/74/75/76. All were repainted into the Park & Ride blue livery as per the photo of 67760 on page 15. Another Enviro 300, 67406, came from First Manchester to act as the spare bus. 67406 was in Urban livery, later repainted into Ipswich Reds livery. The removal of the Rendlesham extension led to a reduction in the PVR and 67763 was repainted into Ipswich Reds livery in October 2019. There was a reduction of the basic frequency to every 20 minutes at some point during or after the Covid pandemic.

Despite the tender award now being over eight years ago, and the vehicles on it being over 12 years old, there has been no report of the service going out for retender. It is possible it was extended during the pandemic. Of the eight Enviro 300s acquired for the service, 67406 (the original spare bus), 67763 and 67775 have moved to First Essex as reported in various EBMs. There has been talk in the past that the other five would join them, and indeed, on 6 September 2025 67760 did so (see 'Acquired Vehicles' above). The fate of the remaining four depends on how long they are needed at Ipswich.

In the service revisions of 31 August 2025, service 65 was withdrawn… and replaced by an hourly extension of the Park & Ride service 800 from Martlesham to Rendlesham! On the morning of 2 September, the 800 was worked by six buses, all five (at the time) remaining Enviro 300s, 67752/60/73/74/76, plus StreetLite 47680 (which had been on loan to First Essex from First Cymru from November 2023 to September 2024 before moving to Ipswich).

Last month it was reported that StreetLite 47645 had moved from Hadleigh (First Essex) to Lowestoft. This replaced former First Essex Enviro 200 44599 (which was illustrated at Lowestoft in EBM 735) which last ran in service on 2 August, then was stored at Great Yarmouth before going for scrap on 4 September. As reported in 'Disposals' above, 47647 & 47648 have now also moved from Hadleigh to Lowestoft.

44518 was deleted from Bustimes during August. 44516 and 44517 had been withdrawn earlier (exact dates not known) so just 44519 is still in service at Ipswich. This is the last of these first four ex-First Essex Enviro 200s that were new to Harwich in 2009. (44519 was illustrated in Ipswich in EBN 686, June 2021.)

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Dale Bell, David Edwards, John Lidstone, William Morrison, Gareth Norris, John Podgorski, Roger A Smith, Derek Stebbing, Andrew Toms, Bus Lists on the Web, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

Below: Further to the photo on the inside front cover, a rear facing interior view of Yutong E12 65164 (YB25 VXL) on route 25 at Southend Travel Centre on 23 September 2025. Items to note: moquette seats, wood effect floor, skylight at rear, number of steps up to rear and the height of the rear seats (to accommodate batteries) and the next stop screen for wheelchair users (also useful for passengers in rear facing seats), which has been a legal requirement on new buses since last October. **John G Lidstone**





Above & Below: Front & rear views of 65164 on route 25 at Southend Travel Centre on 23 September 2025, the historic first day of electric buses running in Southend for the first time in 71 years, since the last SCT trolleybus ran on 28 October 1954 on the 'Western Circular'. This was 65164's first day in service, but it wasn't the first electric bus in Southend that day, 65154 had run a round trip from Basildon and back on route 25 in the morning. Although they have wording "Funded by UK Government" they are in fact only part funded. For new electric buses, the "electric" above the rear wheels is rather understated, compare this to the "A Greener Essex" branding and amended livery of the hybrid electric vehicles introduced 12 years ago. But these are subject to First Bus going through one of its periods of strict corporate image. Both **John G Lidstone**



Keane Travel
Keane Travel has been acquired by Ensignbus. From the start of the autumn term on 3 September, Ensignbus began operating former Keane Travel school services 7A (Socketts Heath, The Oak - St Clare's Academy), 7B/C (Socketts Heath, The Oak - Mossbourne Portside Academy and Mossbourne Fobbing Academy) and 10 (Lance Corporal Nicky Mason Way - William Edwards School) and will also be operating council service TM0005 and private charters. Vehicles are still operating under the Keane 'O' licence.

Disposals
ADL Enviro 400 MMC 132 (34432, YX66 WLH) to CES Mayflower, Southampton September 2025.
(132 was new to Go-Goodwins, Eccles and at CES Mayflower it has reunited with its ex Go-Goodwins sister, SS66 CES which was new as YX66 WLJ.)

Volvo B8L / MCV eVoSetis 409 (38101, LF22 BZE) and 410 (38102, BU74 YVN), which were only acquired from Imperial Coaches, Slough in June this year, to York Pullman August 2025. As reported in EBM 736, 410 had since gone on loan to Completely Coach Travel in Norfolk, but it is seen **below** shortly after acquisition at Mardens. **John G Lidstone**

Other Vehicle News
Open top Enviro 400 301 (SN11 FPA) which had previously only been used for private hires, entered service on route 99 on 29 July 2025. It is in fleet livery of blue and grey, but has had side and rear adverts added for the route. 301 has a new style of Ensignbus side fleet name, without black edging. This bus was illustrated on the front cover and page 1 of last month's EBM.

With thanks to Paul Harvey, John Lidstone and LOTS.



Route 99 Summer 2025

This open top route, from Southend Pier to Shoeburyness East Beach, started last year, complementing existing open top 68, Southend Pier to Leigh-on-Sea Railway Station. This year the two routes were combined under the 99 number. Although it was a shame to lose the long standing 68 number, 99 made sense as four vehicles are branded with the number and there is the ice cream connection. The livery variations of the four buses was also an attraction with children wanting to spot and ride on the different coloured buses. Here are some photos of the route taken in 2025.

Right: The interesting bus stop flag at the occasional Sutherland Boulevard, Leigh-on-Sea route 99 terminus. An intriguing suggestion of an open top double-decker by means of adding an extra layer to the usual single-decker design shown on bus stops. Perhaps an extravagance for the couple of journeys that start there especially as it's not the only service that stops there, as the equally irregular 17 now also serves it. 31 July.



Below: To cover a non-available vehicle at the last minute to avoid cancelling journeys, TransBus Enviro 500 368 (68 EB), on loan from Zero2 Bus Museum, emergency covered just a rounder and a half at the end of the day on the 99 on 27 August, its first time on the route (but in previous years it had been used on the 68). Its appearance has changed somewhat since it graced the front cover of EBM 688 (August 2021). Gone are the 'Seaside Service 68' posters, Ensignbus fleet names and other lettering. It now has black wheels instead of red and the cooling grilles are now a different colour to previously (part red, part silver), as well as the rearview mirror casings now being white (in place of red). It also now has a CCTV camera binnacle above the cab which wasn't there before.

It has also been used as the 'office bus' parked at the Pier during the day, but its only other use in service on route 99 was when it replaced 367 for one round trip during the afternoon of 3 September. Both **John G Lidstone**







Above: Two photos of the sole remaining Volvo B7L / Ayats Bravo, 369 (EU05 BZM), in Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea. **Left**: This summer the 99 has been blessed with many dry and hot days, but there was more rain towards the end of August and into September. The rain on the morning of 29 August was particularly heavy and 369 was operating with the upper deck closed off, its waterproof fold down cover drawn over the stairwell. It was therefore working basically as a single-decker when seen on the 0943 journey to East Beach. **Right**: A car meet on the seafront the next day caused significant delays to the route and 369 is over an hour late when seen at 1922. Although of inconvenience to the passengers and driver, it did afford this dusk view with the bus's headlights on and with the sea in the background. **Below**: Route 99 normally does a circular trip around Leigh-on-Sea, outward from Shoeburyness via The Ship and Old Leigh, returning via Broadway and Grand Drive. This has been the route operated since route 68 was brought back in summer 2017. However, the traditional route 68 served the steep and (due to parking both sides) narrow Grand Drive both ways. This route was used again for a week or so at the end of August due to a diversion caused by the closure of the road between Leigh Hill and the Ship due to emergency electrical cabling repairs. Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 'Butterscotch Breezer' 367 (MX58 DXZ) is thus seen unusually climbing Grand Drive on 31 August.





Above: Similar type Bubblegum Beachcomber 366 (MX58 DXV) under stormy skies and a rainbow over the Pier on the penultimate day of route 99 for 2025, 13 September. This photo and all on previous page **John G Lidstone**
Below: Similar type Strawberry Streamliner 364 (MX58 DXS) at Thorpe Esplanade, Thorpe Bay Gardens on the last day of the Southend open top service for 2025, 14 September. **Richard Delahoy**



New Vehicles
Further to last month, mini ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMC 315 is still at Rochford.



Service News
New routes 23/A/B, previewed in last month's EBM, duly commenced on 31 August (no 23B on Sundays). They have a PVR of one on Sundays and three on other days. 372 ran on 31st, with 371 and 373 entering service the next day. Unlike 371 & 372, 373 doesn't have route branding on its rear.

Disposals
Enviro 200 422 (EU60 CAV) sold to 1st Bus Stop, Gravesend.
Solos 323 (EU07 FVN) and 327 (MX06 BPZ**)** sold to A1 Coaches, Skelmersdale.
Above Right: 422 and 327 withdrawn at Rochford depot on 29 July 2025 prior to being sold. **John G Lidstone**

With thanks to the companies.

Below: As mentioned in the First Essex report, Colchester Road, Lawford, was closed from 28 July to 11 September 2025 whilst Cadent replaced gas mains pipes. When the new school term started at Manningtree High School on 2 September, school bus drivers had to use residential roads, Cavendish Drive and Edgefield Avenue, in Lawford to & from the school. This included Stephensons Thorrington - Manningtree High School service 721. Colchester Road re-opened on 11th. On that day Stephensons Scania N230UD / ADL Enviro 400 613 (SN15 ETF) is seen turning from Long Road, Lawford, into Colchester Road, running dead from Frating depot to Manningtree High School. 613 then worked the 1510 721. 613 was only at Frating depot on 11th and 12th am, it was back in service at Rochford on the afternoon of the 12th. **Robert Appleton**





More photos of the new mini Enviro 200 MMCs. **Above**: 314 on 316. 314 (YW25 DFY) entered service from Rochford depot on 30 July 2025 before moving to Boreham on 14 August. It is seen in Saffron Walden on 26 August.
Richard Delahoy
Below: And 316, not on 314, but on 32. 316 (YW25 DGF) also entered service from Rochford depot, on 29 July, before moving to Boreham, on 6 August. It is approaching Two Brewers, Ongar terminus on 2 September. **Robert Downton**



Arriva London

Hybrid buses of the Volvo B5LH / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 HV type finally appeared at Grays (GY) garage, hybrids being required for the contract for route 370 (Romford - Lakeside) that commenced on 2 November 2024, the delay being caused by late introduction of battery electric vehicles elsewhere to enable the release of the vehicles required. The first recorded was HV271 on 9 August 2025. By mid-September, HV271-9/342-5/347-58/360/1/4/5/370/7 had been recorded on the route, all of them having come from Tottenham (AR) garage. Both DW (VDL DB300 / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2) and T type (ADL Enviro 400) vehicles continue to appear for now, some days seeing all three types in use. DW213 and 222 have been recorded working the route during September 2025. The missing HV type numbers in the sequences above are all still at AR, except HV366 at GY (but which hasn't yet appeared on the 370).
AR will cease operating route 123 from February 2026, so if the entire non-LT type double deck fleet at GY is not HV before then, it is likely to become so soon afterwards.

Although not directly affected by the closure of the Gallows Corner junction (see Stagecoach London below), between Monday 23 June and Friday 19 September 2025, route 375 (Romford - Passingford Bridge) was temporarily curtailed to run only between Collier Row and Passingford Bridge to avoid delays in Romford. The temporary timetable had the departures from Passingford Bridge significantly later than usual, apart from the last of the day. Solitary Grays single deck Enviro 200 ENL112 continues to be the allocated bus fairly reliably but supported by T type Enviro 400 buses, no DW type having been recorded since March 2025. The first and, so far, only HV type recorded was HV375 on 1 September.

The three-year October 2024 contract for route 150 (Becontree Heath - Chigwell Row) at Barking (DX) garage also required hybrid vehicles but none have been used so far. The route continues with its T type vehicles supported by DW type. If these are not also replaced by HV type, in due course there will be another possible source of hybrids available when Superloop SL2 transfers from DX to AR, filling some of the space vacated by the 123, and is due to be worked by electric buses. The current vehicles used on the SL2 are HA type Enviro 400H City vehicles. The SL2 has a PVR of 16 and the 150 requires 15 buses.

Go Ahead London

A notable vehicle recorded on the 677 (Ilford - Debden) morning trip on 10 September 2025 was Wrightbus StreetDeck Electroliner DEL103 a first and, so far, only example of the type. Otherwise E214 remains the regular vehicle, no others having been recorded so far this school term.

There have been several Central line weekend closures affecting the sections in Essex since the last report, with Go Ahead London providing vehicles on the CL-6 (Hainault - Woodford) and CL-7 (Loughton - Theydon Bois) when needed. Of special note was a longer closure of the Newbury Park to Woodford via Hainault section from Wednesday 27 until Sunday 31 August 2025. My observations were very limited but commercial fleet vehicles were in use and included double deck Enviro 400 EN3 in the cream and maroon livery on 28th. I am not aware of double-deckers being used on this service at any time previously, so this may be a first. Any other observations would be welcome.

Stagecoach London

A new contract for route 275 (Walthamstow, St James Street - Barkingside) starts on 25 February 2026. Although retained by Stagecoach East London, it calls for new battery electric double-deckers so will see the end of the current variety of vehicles in use on the route; older Enviro 400 and 400H buses, Enviro 400H MMC and City vehicles all continue to appear.

Another new contract will be for route 372 (Hornchurch - Lakeside) commencing 28 March 2026. It also stays with Stagecoach East London but will require two additional buses, giving a PVR of 8. Battery electric vehicles are required. Meanwhile 'micro hybrid' Enviro 400 MMC buses 11075-81 are the usual vehicles with support by other types of diesel and hybrid Enviro 400s.

Route 379 (Chingford - Yardley Lane Estate) has seen a number of the Enviro 100EV buses allocated to Walthamstow Avenue (AW) for route W12 but otherwise the allocated Switch Metrocity buses are now supported only by the

demonstrator 89999 and diesel Enviro 200 37720. The other two Enviro 200 diesels previously used, 36325/6, have been transferred south of the river to Catford (TL) garage, in May and June 2025.

Romford - Brentwood route 498 was affected by a closure of the Gallows Corner junction for the rebuilding of the flyover from Monday 23 June 2025. All traffic except buses, black taxis and emergency service vehicles was diverted away from the roundabout. Although no diversion of the route was involved, congestion caused by other traffic being diverted caused delays. A temporary timetable with reduced frequencies is in place for the duration of the works. A diversion of the 498 in Brentwood was implemented from 15 September because of gas main works in the High Street which was closed to through traffic. This is expected to last for six weeks. The diversion is via Weald Road, Western Road and William Hunter Way to turn at the Sainsbury's roundabout adjacent to (but not using, as other diverted routes require the stop) the normal stand, instead buses terminate / commence on the opposite side of the road further down.

Wrightbus StreetDeck Electroliner buses remain rare on route 498. To correct my report in EBM 735, it was 82097 recorded late on 12 June 2025, 82037 appearing during the late afternoon and evening of the following day. Only two other workings have been recorded since, 82045 on 23 June and 82026 late evening on 9 August. All four vehicles have appeared only once. Otherwise, the route remains in the hands of Enviro 400H original and MMC buses.

Barking (BK) garage now has two Enviro 200s, 36545/48 (LX12 DJO/Y) from Bromley (TB) garage to add to the pool used on routes 167, 362 and 462. 36545 was on route 462 on 21 September, 36548 on the 167 from 22 September.

Route W14 (Whipps Cross - Loughton) had become fully operated by Volvo BZL electric buses by August 2025 but four Enviro 200 diesels (37569/70/6/8) have been recorded during September, all for short periods in afternoons and evenings. The greater demands on the fleet during school terms may account for this.

With thanks to Robert Munster's London Bus Routes website, LOTS and London Vehicle Finder (LVF).

Below: Dennis Dart SLF / Caetano DN181 (Y181 RCR) at the 'Blue Triangle and beyond … Commemorating 40 years since the formation of the Blue Triangle Bus Company, Romford' event at North Weald Station on 14 September 2025. New to Blue Triangle in March 2001, one of a batch of eight. It was making its debut in preservation. **Paul Sparks**



Other Operators

Roger A Smith

Barker, Roydon
Recently acquired are YN55 KWH, an UNVI C18F bodied Mercedes-Benz 616CDI, previously with SNA Transport, Lower Morden, London and YD67 MKO, a Yutong ZK6938HQ (C35FT) ex-Premier, Luton, Bedfordshire. LFZ 8052, a Scania K400EB6 with Irizar C63FL body, has gone from here.

Ford, Althorne
Gone from here is YN07 LKK, a Berkhof C57FT bodied Scania K340EB.

Jones, Braintree
To correct last month's report, the E20D / Enviro 200 MMC reported as new here in May 2025 is registered YX25 OHF, not YX25 OHC. Gone from here is YJ59 HLX, a BMC 900 (B27F).

Middleton (Marc 1 Travel), Billericay
Recent arrivals here are C6 DUR (ex X474 ROA), a Setra S315 GT-HD (C49FT), previously with Evangdon, Nunhead, London, K60 BYS, a Setra S415HD (C48FT), acquired from Milestone Coaches, Canvey Island and K18 DYS (ex YN03 AXP), a Neoplan N316SHD (C53F), from Kevendy, Wickford.

Zero2 Bus Museum, Great Yeldham
New to Western National Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB / ECW 1168 (FDV 780V) is a recent acquisition from Tossell, Weston-Super-Mare. It was already in NBC livery, but has been repainted at Mardens, as seen **below** on 22 July 2025 about to depart for its journey to its new home in North Essex. **John G Lidstone**

With thanks to the PSV Circle.



Go Ahead East Anglia Sale to Transport Made Simple
As reported on page 5, it was announced on 22 September 2025 that from 1 October the Konectbus and Konectbuses operations would be acquired by Transport Made Simple.

Withdrawn Vehicles

462	NK56 KJN	Withdrawn at CN 21 August.
470	EU05 CLJ	Withdrawn and removed from fleet list.
510	LB02 YWX	Withdrawn and reported to be for scrap by 15 August.
640	LX56 EUC	Enviro 400 bridge strike reported as sold.
827	YN57 FYB	Remains scrapped and removed from CN depot.

Significant Allocations
Mercedes-Benz minibus allocations

100/2/4	Sudbury
101/3/5	Kelvedon

Other vehicles

824	YN07 UOF	CN - SY	by 27 August
825	YN07 UOG	CN - SY	by 1 September
826	YN57 FYA	CN - SY	by 9 September

Fleet News
Further to last month, Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 45s 102 & 104 entered service on 2 & 1 September respectively. Like 103 & 105, they have received Konectbuses fleet names on their as acquired dark blue livery.

Enviro 200 292 (EU59 AFF) has been repainted into the new Konectbuses livery, leaving 293 (EU59 AFJ) as the last vehicle in the original Hedingham livery as acquired on takeover in 2012. 292 re-entered service on 4 September 2025 on service 16, Wethersfield - Chelmsford, after a period off road since 29 July. It may be the last repaint into Konectbuses livery, if so it was a very short window of repaints into this livery. A photo of it is on page 31.

As reported last month, the 31 August service changes saw the old Chambers Sudbury routes renumbered in a series between 40 and 50. The new town service 49 started with Mercedes-Benz minibus 104 (BU18 YRR). The service passes through a bus gate at Chaucer Road which allows wider wheel spaced vehicles to pass but is very tight for minibuses. The minibuses sourced for the new service and schools are settling in with 101 and 105 witnessed on 5 September undertaking PL6 and PL5 Plume school services respectively.

The reduction of service 89 to positional journeys just between the Hedinghams and Halstead has also seen the introduction of service 42 which runs from Braintree Freeport to Sudbury and gives the ability to further travel to Bury St Edmunds - a travel time of circa two hours. This, plus the increase in service 88 duties, has seen the long chassis ex Brighton & Hove Scania OmniDekkas 821-3 (YN56 FFA-C), which were previously allocated predominantly to school or college contracts, being used. For the new school term and Sudbury service changes, Clacton has moved 826/8/30-832 YN57 FYA/C/E/J/L Scania OmniDekkas out to Sudbury or Kelvedon depots following the arrivals of the Enviro 400s 629-633 (SN65 OAJ/L/M/O/P) from Konectbus in June this year.

Further to last month, 249 (LX13 CZC) continues on loan to Konectbus. It has been joined in Norfolk by the long awaited 272 (YX61 DVP) and 273 (YX61 DVR). In service 11 and 8 September respectively, this pair completes the four Enviro 200s converted from ex Go Ahead London Central SOE class. These were initially converted at Plymouth but did not have a low level offside emergency exit and have had more work undertaken to meet certification requirements. These vehicles were delivered to Hedingham & Chambers for conversion originally in late 2023 / early 2024; they last ran for London Central in early November 2023. They are in Hedingham red & maroon livery.

All four of the ex-Go Ahead North East Scania OmniCity single-deckers 461-464 have now been withdrawn, last dates in service as follows:

461	NK56 KJF	5 August 2025
462	NK56 KJN	21 August 2025
463	NK56 KJO	29 January 2025
464	NK56 KJV	13 June 2024

These vehicles reportedly suffered chassis issues that contributed to their demise.

Vehicles off road or limited availability in late August / mid-September 2025 were 266 (accident damage), 502, 830. 266 is reportedly being repaired at CN.

Service News

Konectbuses are experiencing severe staffing challenges. On Wednesday 10 September, no 99 ran between Maldon and Broomfield Hospital and there were a number of cancellations elsewhere. Every day there are a lot of cuts to service provision.

Apparently a number of drivers left KN at the end of the summer school term and haven't been replaced. SY is also short of drivers and more are leaving, as BSIP services now mean more late and weekend turns, which historically neither Sible nor Sudbury drivers have seen much of.

The 42 as detailed above is interesting, in that vehicles work through, but HD based drivers only work BE-SY and SY drivers work SY-BSE, but also do some duties from SY-BE.

On 22 September, the announcement day of takeover by TMS, there were multiple cancellations on services 42/A, 43A, 50 and X43 from Sudbury and 63 and 76 from Clacton.

As mentioned in the First Essex report, Colchester Road, Lawford was closed from 28 July to 11 September, because Cadent were replacing the gas mains pipes. Thus Clacton - Mistley 2 could not use Colchester Road, Lawford. Coming from Clacton, buses followed the normal route to Manningtree Railway Station. Then the buses did not go along Station Road to Manningtree, instead, they went back up Cox's Hill, turned left into Long Road, regaining the normal route at the junction of Colchester Road and Long Road, Lawford. Then normal route via Long Road and New Road to Mistley (Rigby Avenue). The return journeys followed the same diversion. Unfortunately this meant that Manningtree, with its shops, cafés, doctor's surgery and dentist, was not served at all. Any passengers had to walk to Manningtree Railway Station, or New Road, Mistley. Perhaps this was the only option, as there are not any safe places in Manningtree town centre where a bus could have turned round. There did not appear to be anything about this diversion on the Konectbuses Essex & Suffolk website.

For the new school term at Manningtree High School in Colchester Road, Lawford from 3 September, school buses were coming to the High School via residential roads, Cavendish Drive, and Edgefield Avenue in Lawford, because Colchester Road was still closed at the Long Road end, but it was open at the Manningtree end. All reverted to normal on 11 September.

Additional Comments

Transport Made Simple took over the Harford & Postwick Park & Ride services in Norwich from Konectbus at the end of March 2025 so it is ironic that TMS will acquire the Konectbus Enviro 400s that were displaced. It is fascinating how the bus industry works and it will be interesting if the growth planned by TMS continues and whether they manage to solve the existing staff shortages and service truncations happening daily under the ownership of Go Ahead. I hope that services improve and that a line is drawn under the reliability and performance issues experienced under Go Ahead ownership.

With thanks to Dave Arnold, David Edwards, John Podgorski and the Konectbuses Essex & Suffolk website.

Opposite top: Enviro 200 292 (EU59 AFF) has been repainted from old red & cream Hedingham livery to new Konectbuses livery. Seen passing Chelmsford Railway Station on route 16 on 9 September 2025. **David Bell**
Will this be the last bus to receive this livery?



Above: 292 (EU59 AFF), details on previous page.

Below: Scania OmniLink 453 (YT11 LVE) at Braintree Bus Interchange on the first day of new route 42 to Bury St Edmunds, 1 September 2025. **John Podgorski**



More Basildon Developments

In EBM 733 we reported that in September 2022, c2c announced that it had made the decision to close a section of Platform 2 (the down platform, towards Shoeburyness) at Basildon Railway Staton due to a worsening of platform movement. This closure was at the part of the platform where the front of 12-carriage trains stopped. Network Rail had been planning major works to rectify the underlying issue at Basildon. However the level of movement was accelerated by the prolonged period of hot dry weather during the summer of 2022, which caused shrinkage of the clay that underlies much of the c2c route. This resulted in this section of platform having to be taken out of use sooner than planned. This section of platform was later demolished. Then in January 2025, the trees and shrubs on the railway embankment, which had been there for decades, were cut down.

Work has now begun on strengthening the embankment before reinstating the front of the platform. To facilitate this, the road outside the railway station was closed on 28 July 2025. The bus station, and taxi rank, are still in use, all bus routes are subject to minor diversion past Basildon Depot.

Right: The view from outside the bus station on 4 August showing the closed off road but the bus station still in use, as is the taxi rank, which is hidden by First Essex Enviro 400 MMC 33983 (SN65 OFY), in Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee/Memorial livery.



Below: This photo, taken from the remaining Platform 2 of the railway station on 20 August, featuring six StreetLites in three liveries plus an Enviro 400, perfectly illustrates the situation.

Both **Nick Street**





Above: New Yutong E12 65165 (YK75 LKP) on route 22 on diversion passing under the bridge in Clay Hill Road, because, as the sign says, the road it would normally use past the bus station is closed. It will pass the bus depot then double-back to the bus station. 25 September 2025, its third day in service. **Nick Street**

Rear Cover Photos

A bit of a contrast to the front cover photo and the one above! Probably the most unusual bus ever to call at First Essex's Hadleigh Depot, this is Zero2 Bus Museum's B-type replica Bedford VAM14 / EL Farrar B1439 (946 WAE), being driven by Karl Griffin, in and out in just five minutes to unload some items having come from Canvey Island and then was heading out for a long run to Kent for garaging on 7 August 2025. It had been being used on special weekend route T1, tours of London, by Londoner Buses just for the high summer school holiday season at weekends.
Since these photos were taken, the depot signage has been replaced as seen **below** on 24 September.
All **John G Lidstone**







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