

Essex Bus Magazine Extra

Celebrating 60 years of publishing

Issue 5 January 2024



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



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Where It All Began

EASTERN NATIONAL ENTHUSIASTS GROUP

NEWS SHEET NUMBER 1

JANUARY 1964

EDITORIAL

The management committee (A. G. Osborne, B. M. Barrett, T. L. Murphy) welcome all members to the Group. As there was only a limited quantity of information available for the first News Sheet we have taken the opportunity of publishing a complete fleet allocation of Eastern National and a list of all new and acquired vehicles received since the publication of the Fleet List E.N.1. As all members will eventually obtain this News Sheet it is hoped that it will function as a starting block for all subsequent allocations, transfers, and details of new and acquired vehicles. In order that next months News Sheet may be filled to the brim will all members please send in any notes that they consider will be of interest to the Secretary. In future the News Sheet will be published at about the 15th of the month, this edition was delayed owing to enrolment of new members.

ILFORD MEETING

Wednesday 22nd January, 1964 at 7, Cambridge Drive, Seven Kings. 7 - 9 p.m.

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EASTERN NATIONAL OMNIBUS CO. LTD.

New Vehicles

1657	993 KOO	Bristol FLF6B	217.048	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13944	10/63
1658	994 KOO	Bristol FLF6B	217.049	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13945	10/63
1659	995 KOO	Bristol FLF6B	217.050	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13946	10/63
1660	934 LWC	Bristol FLF6G	217.068	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13947	11/63
1661	935 LWC	Bristol FLF6G	217.069	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13948	11/63
1662	936 LWC	Bristol FLF6B	217.076	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13949	12/63
1663	937 LWC	Bristol FLF6B	217.077	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13950	12/63
1664	938 LWC	Bristol FLF6B	217.078	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13951	12/63
1665	AVX956B	Bristol FLF6B	217.081	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13952	12/63
1666	AVX957B	Bristol FLF6G	217.097	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13953	12/63
1667	AVX958B	Bristol FLF6G	217.099	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13954	12/63
1668	AVX959B	Bristol FLF6G	217.100	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13955	1/64
1669	AVX960B	Bristol FLF6	217.101	E.C.W. LD38/32FD	13956	1/64

N.B. 1663-5 have Cave-Brown-Cave heating systems.
1665-7 were delivered as 727-9 WWC but were re-registered by Essex C.C. under the new system, which had commenced in 12/63, but with 'B' suffixes as they did not enter service until 1/64.

579	AVX962B	Bristol RELH6G	E.C.W. C47F	13722	1/64
580	AVX963B	Bristol RELH6G	E.C.W. C47F	13733	1/64

N.B. These vehicles were delivered as 940/1 LWC.

It seems likely that outstanding Reg. Nos. reserved for E.N. under the old system (LWC 870-6, 939-45 LWC) will not be issued and all future new vehicles will be registered under the new system.

Acquired Vehicles

043	MXB 742	Bristol LL6G	87.063	E.C.W. FC35F	6274	1952
044	SLA 760	Bristol LS6B	119.083	E.C.W. C34F	9950	1957
045	SLA 761	Bristol LS6B	119.105	E.C.W. C34F	9951	1957
046	10 DLY	Bristol MW6G	184.245	E.C.W. C34F	12846	1962
047	12 DLY	Bristol MW6G	195.001	E.C.W. C34F	12848	1962
048	13 DLY	Bristol MW6G	195.002	E.C.W. C34F	12849	1962
049	NWC 14	Bristol MW6G	204.013	E.C.W. C34F	13675	1962
	YBD 200	Bristol MW6G	184.037	E.C.W. C34F	12229	1961
	YBD 201	Bristol MW6G	184.038	E.C.W. C34F	12230	1961
	YBD 202	Bristol MW6G	184.058	E.C.W. C34F	12231	1961

043-9 are ex Tillings Transport, acquired 11/63.

YBD 200-2 are ex United Counties (Nos. 200-2), acquired 1/64.

GENERAL

The first of the companies Bristol SC's to be sold are 435-7, to Cumberland Motor Services, Whitehaven in 1/64.

Another T.H.C. company reported to have Bristol Lodekkas registered under the new system is Eastern Counties. The vehicles in question are:-

LFS 73/4 AAH 173/4 Bristol FS5G E.C.W. LD60R entered service 1/1/64

A complete list of withdrawn vehicles since the publication of E.P.1. will be given next month.

Essex Bus Magazine Extra from the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

Issue 5

January 2024

Introduction

Back in January 1964 we - then known as the Eastern National Enthusiasts Group (ENEG) - were established as a stand-alone club and published our first News Sheet, reproduced left. To mark that significant anniversary, we are publishing this extra issue of EBM Extra, devoted to the events of 1964 and our early News Sheets.

Our current Chairman, Ian Ransom, has very generously sponsored this issue, you can read more from Ian on page 2. All articles in this magazine were written by Richard Delahoy, except where noted.

We plan to publish two Extras each year, subject to funding; we already have sponsors for 2024 and 2025. This issue is in addition to those, so you can look forward to Extra 6 in the Spring and Extra 7 in the Autumn. We hope you will enjoy this *extra* Extra magazine and will find the range of articles interesting and stimulating, please read on and celebrate our 60th anniversary with us!

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Front cover: in 1964 EN took delivery of two magnificent Bristol FLFs with their ECW bodies kitted out with coach seats and luggage racks for use on the Southend to London express service, 1671/2 (BVX 668/9B, to become 2606/7 in August '64) to add to the six already owned. In the unmistakable surroundings of Victoria Coach Station, 2607 is seen gathering passengers for Southend on the X10, probably in summer 1964. In the background are Royal Blue and Bristol Greyhound coaches and the rear of an Austin Cambridge A60. **Richard Delahoy collection.**

Essex Bus Magazine Extra is published by the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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EASTERN NATIONAL SOUTHEAST & DISTRICT SOUTHEND TRANSPORT
JOINT SERVICES

NEW BUS SERVICES

AND MAJOR ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING SERVICES

COMMENCE ON SUNDAY, 19th APRIL 1964

Descriptive leaflets (free) and complete timetable (6d.) available
from local bus enquiry offices and information bureaux

My interest in buses goes back to the early 1960's when, as a young boy, my parents, who didn't have a car, would take my sister and myself off to visit family by bus. We lived on Chignall Estate in Chelmsford, so any trip would start on what to me was a "cold bus", in reality an open platform Bristol, into town. Then we would go to either Writtle Oxney Green, I think on a Bristol FLF (43/A), to visit my grandmother, Ingatestone on the 351 (some of which were exciting to me, as they went to London Wood Green) to visit my Aunt, Uncle and Cousin, or what then was a mammoth trip to Brentwood, which would involve 3 buses each way (42/351 and 262), to visit my Aunt, Uncle and three cousins on Bishops Hall Estate. I remember Green Line, London Country and I'm sure LT buses around Wilson's Corner, all very exciting.

I fondly remember how my sister and my friends would make up our own little bus to play on in the back garden, in reality, it was a rug, with our own handwritten adverts, copied from those on the side of actual buses. In those days, I would normally drive, while my sister was the clippie. We also used to go on day trips during the summer by Eastern National day trips, or to the Essex Coast, usually by Grey Green. I can remember my parents having what they would call a discussion, with Grey Green drivers, as it always seemed that although we had pre booked tickets, there wasn't room on the coach, so we would have to sit on our parents' laps, even though we were at junior school. There were also summer trips to Maldon, Southend and Colchester Zoo, among many other destinations.

So, I suppose a love of bus travel came about as it has great memories of using buses or coaches to get out for the day. However, it wasn't until my late teens, that I started "bus spotting". For this, I have to blame the Huggins brothers, who on the way home from an Inter City Railway Society (ICRS) tour of railway depots in Scotland, started talking about bus spotting. As I'd seen almost every train in the south of the country, it seemed like a good idea, for the odd trip out. I didn't realise how much of an obsession it would become!

I soon joined the Eastern National Enthusiasts Group, as this seemed like a good way to keep up, with what was going on, in the local area. I'd often have trips out in Richard Huggins' car, to EN depots on a Sunday, together with Colchester and Southend, the problem being, that I'd soon almost cleared Eastern National, so needed to go further afield. Saturdays, were usually taken up with trips to Eastern Counties or to London and it seems unbelievable now, that I actually managed to see every LT bus in service by 1983. Holidays to any part of the country, were in effect bus spotting trips and even on ICRS depot visit trips, Richard Huggins would somehow have us walking round bus depots in places like Hartlepool or Blackpool at 0400, no health and safety issues then!

Even when I started going out with Sally, who became my wife, she used to joke about me only wanting to go out with her as the Bristol FLF operated services 44A/B used to take me from Melbourne Farm to her house on Moulsham Lodge. It is true to say that leaving to go home was sad, but that may be because the evening service was usually a crew operated Leyland National!

During my time with ENEG and EBEG, I've been sub-editor for Eastern National, publicity, service revisions and for a while editor of the entire magazine, plus tours organiser. I've more recently been Chair and Chelmsford meetings organiser. With a completely different hat on, I've also been a controller at some of the New Year's Day running events in Southend. So although I've never worked in the industry, I've been involved in other ways.

To finish, as Chair, I'd like to place on record my thanks and I'm sure those of you reading, to the many people, who have been involved in producing the newsletter/magazine/EBM Extra, and to those that have submitted reports, photographs and other items over the years. Also to those that have played a part in running the group and raising funds.

Right: Bristol LD 2536 (59 PPU) on the 42 in Chelmsford Bus Station. In Tilling green but with NBC names and a white band. **RD collection**



That Was The Year That Was - 1964 at a Glance

A highly selective look at some events of the year

1 January - *Top of the Pops* first airs on BBC TV

6 January - Leyland Motor Corporation announces the sale of 450 buses to the Cuban government, challenging the United States blockade of Cuba. An early shipment ends up in the Thames off Grays when the ship carrying them, the East German MV *Magdeburg*, sinks in October 1964. Foul play was suspected

21 January - Government figures show that the average weekly wage is £16

25 February - Cassius Clay (later Muhammad Ali) beats Sonny Liston in Miami Beach, Florida, and is crowned the heavyweight champion of the World

10 March - Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip's youngest child, Prince Edward, is born

28 March - "pirate" radio station Radio Caroline begins regular broadcasting from a ship anchored just outside UK territorial waters off Felixstowe. It is soon followed by others, including Radio Atlanta from the MV *Mi Amigo* anchored off Frinton-on-Sea (in July its operations are merged with Radio Caroline), Radio Sutcliffe from Shivering Sands Army Fort in the Thames Estuary and Wonderful Radio London from MV *Galaxy* anchored off Frinton-on-Sea

30 March - violent disturbances between Mods and Rockers at Clacton beach

4 April - The Beatles hold an unprecedented top 5 positions in the Billboard Top 40 singles in America, with "Can't Buy Me Love", "Twist and Shout", "She Loves You", "I Want to Hold Your Hand", and "Please Please Me"

16 April - sentences totalling 307 years are passed on twelve men who stole £2,600,000 in used bank notes, after holding up the night train from Glasgow to London in August 1963 - the Great Train Robbery

18 April - Liverpool win the Football League First Division for the sixth time in their history

21 April - BBC Two begins scheduled broadcasting; its first programme is *Play School*

2 May - West Ham United win the FA Cup for the first time in their history, beating Preston North End 3-2 at Wembley Stadium

Southend United end the 1963/4 football season in 14th place in League Division 3 with 45 points, just two points and three places above local rivals Colchester United

19 June - Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson born. 47 years later he drives the first New Routemaster out of the Wrights' factory. Meanwhile, deliveries of real Routemasters reach RM2105 by the end of 1964

28 July - Winston Churchill retires from the House of Commons at the age of 89

13 August - the last executions take place in the British Isles, when two men are hanged (in November Parliament votes to abolish the death penalty)

22 August - the first *Match of the Day* airs on BBC Two television

August - the US involvement in the Vietnam War escalates with Congress authorising the president to "take all necessary measures, including the use of armed force"

17 September - *Goldfinger*, the third James Bond film, premieres at Odeon Leicester Square in London

15 October - The Labour Party defeats the Conservatives in the General Election. Harold Wilson becomes Prime Minister, with a majority of five seats. We didn't know it then, but this would later lead to the BET Group selling its bus interests to the Government in 1967, the formation of the National Bus Company and the reshaping of the bus industry

2 November - ITV soap opera *Crossroads* airs for the first time

23 December - highly controversial Chairman of the British Railways Board, Richard Beeching, announces his intention to resign after three-and-a-half years, during which he proposed the closure of many smaller and financially non-viable railway lines as well as many passenger services on surviving lines

24 December - The Beatles gain the Christmas number one for the second year running with "I Feel Fine", their sixth number one single in the United Kingdom. Other classic number ones during the year included The Dave Clark Five with "Glad All Over", Peter and Gordon "A World Without Love", The Animals "The House of the Rising Sun", The Rolling Stones "It's All Over Now", The Kinks "You Really Got Me" and The Supremes "Baby Love".

ENEG was established in 1962 as part of the M&D & East Kent Bus Club and became a separate society on 1 January 1964, publishing our first News Sheet that month. Alan Osborne takes up the story.

I first met Don Vincent, the Founder of the M&D and EK Bus Club in Canterbury Bus Station on a sunny day in the summer of 1960. We chatted, whilst serenaded by the melodious tones of the magnificent 'JG' Leyland TD4s and TD5s of East Kent. A little while later I joined the Club. After an exchange of letters, Don invited me to become the Ilford Area Representative, the appointment being shown in their June 1961 news sheet. The eagle-eyed amongst you will notice that my Seven Kings address was then shown as 7, Cambridge Drive. Because of constant misdirected mail deliveries, the name of our road was later changed (by an Act of Parliament!) to Farley Drive.

Why an Ilford Group you might ask? Historically, North Woolwich on our side of the Thames was originally part of Kent. Moreover, M&D express service E14 from Leysdown on the Isle of Sheppey set down in south London as far as Blackheath and then traversed the Blackwall Tunnel to then serve Poplar (Aberfeldy Street), Stratford (Manbey Park Road) and terminated at Leyton (Winwoods Coach Station, Lea Bridge Road). The sight of a 'KKK' green and cream Harrington bodied A.E.C. Regal CO coach by the side of Maryland Station bound for Leysdown is a lasting memory for me. The M&D Club news sheet also featured the coaches of A. Timpson & Sons, a BET-owned company based at Rushey Green, Catford. Timpsons also had a garage in Crayford, Kent. Perhaps less well known was that they had a garage in East Ham in High Street South. This was later demolished and a Fire Station erected on the site.

One of my first activities for the Ilford Group was to arrange a coach tour visiting Eastern National garages and also Colchester Corporation which took place on 2 November 1961. The vehicle used was Burlingham bodied Leyland Royal Tiger 133 (FJN 212, as illustrated in EBN 575, March 2012), most ably driven by ex-City Coach Company driver, Sid Lonton. The coach started from Ilford (Clements Road) and then picked up the bulk of the passengers at Tilbury who had made the ferry crossing from Gravesend. As a preliminary to the tour, M&DEK publication P20 (List of Eastern National garages and code letters) was issued, price 2d (plus 2d postage, total less than 2p!) from Club Headquarters in Bexley.

Following discussions with Don Vincent, the Ilford Group became the Eastern National Enthusiasts Group on 1 March 1962, and was formed into a separate society from 1 January 1964. Thence forward the two Societies went their different ways, but still kept in close contact through an exchange of news sheets, as we still do today. This became more pertinent from 1964 with the formation of Dartford Tunnel Coachways with through express services introduced between Essex and Kent, as you can read on pages 26 & 27.

Below: Tilbury Ferry terminus. LS 421 (later 1241), 437 FEV, waits for the long run to Clacton. **Frank Church**



Monthly coverage - for 60 years

From the very beginning, we've published monthly (with just the occasional gap due to postal strikes) - 725 issues to date, including supplements and Extras. The News Sheets were initially produced on a duplicator, involving typing up stencils (carefully, although correction fluid could be used!) and then running paper through a duplicator, initially by the Chane Duplicating Agency of Billericay and later through the use of duplicating facilities at The City University, before we bought our own duplicator in 1973. 1964's output comprised just two sides of foolscap per month, with a print run of 100 (today we produce over 300 copies). We reported on deliveries of new vehicles, withdrawals, allocation changes, service changes and general news about Eastern National and Tillings Transport (see pages 28 & 29 for more about Tillings). From the outset we enjoyed good relations with the Company and received official updates every month from the successive Chief Engineers. Our coverage also included Colchester and Southend Corporations, plus Ipswich fleet changes, and the occasional mention of independent operators.

Two pages a month sufficed for many years, our first three-pager being in February 1970 to record the transfer of the Tillings coach fleet to EN. We'd also issued a supplement in April 1965 due to the extensive service changes that took place then - something we repeated in April 2022 but on a much more lavish scale. From 1971, three and four-page issues became more common and from 1973 we changed to A4 size paper. The page count varied according to the flow of news, peaking at 16 pages for the April 1986 issue. A supplement issued in November 1980 marked News Sheet 200 and told the history of the Group to date.

With the massive changes inflicted on the bus industry by the 1985 Transport Act, which heralded the so-called de-regulation of October 1986, the Group changed its name subtly to the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group from May 1987 and our coverage expanded to the greater number of companies now providing bus services in Essex, as we continue to do today. Meanwhile, the former duplicated A4 sheets were changed to a printed A5 size booklet, entitled *Essex Bus News* and heralding the use of photos as well as text. The page count gradually expanded until reaching today's standard of 32 pages plus covers, the most we can post at the standard Royal Mail letter rate. Colour came to the covers from April 2008 and then inside as well from July 2021, when we subtly altered the title from *News* to *Magazine*. Today's EBM shows just how much the technology has changed over 60 years and what can be achieved on a home PC or laptop now.

Over our sixty years we've had just eight Editors, increasingly supported by a team of sub-editors:

Alan Osborne	January 1964 to February 1979	Sean Menzies	January 2001 to December 2003
Derek Stebbing	March 1979 to December 1986	David Harman	January 2004 to December 2012
Ian Ransom	January 1987 to January 1993	Maurice Austin	January 2013 to September 2020
Peter Snell	February 1993 to December '00	Adam Kelleher	October 2020 to date

Below: News Sheet 3 recorded the delivery of Bristol RELH BNO 106B (596, later 1605). Here it stands at the entrance to the yard at Prittlewell depot in a shot taken by one of the Group's founders and first committee members, **Laurie Murphy**.



Eastern National in 1964

Modernisation of the fleet continued at pace during 1964, with loads of FLF Lodekkas, the first rear-engined coaches - Bristol RELHs - a handful of MW coaches and also the introduction of a new type, with half a dozen lightweight Bedford coaches with Duple (Northern) bodies, quite a change for a Tilling Group company, although EN weren't the only ones to flirt with lightweights at the time. All the 1964 deliveries are listed on page 21.

Astonishingly, the fleet entered 1964 still with three buses on pre-war chassis, albeit all having been rebodied post-war. The three dated from 1937 and comprised 1108 (ENO 937), the last surviving Leyland TD4, and 1257/8 (FPU 512/4), Bristol K5Gs. All would be withdrawn during 1964 (1257, by then renumbered 2200, in January 1965 - see picture on page 13). There were still 20 Guy Arab double deckers, inherited with the 1963 take-over of Moore Bros of Kelvedon, along with their three Commer Avenger coaches, whilst 20 Leyland Titans remained on the fleet, all but one from the erstwhile City Coach Co and Hicks fleets, although all were to go by the end of 1965.

A major event was the complete renumbering of the fleet in August 1964, as described in the article on pages 22-4.

Withdrawals saw off almost all of the remaining early post-war buses and one particularly significant bus, 1944-built 2201 (JVW 430), a Bristol K5G which carried the prototype post-war style lowbridge ECW body (again, picture on p 13). It was sold in November to Group members Keith Jenkinson and Terry Smith for preservation and remains with us today, albeit in store at the Canvey Island Transport Museum and awaiting another round of restoration. Major service changes in April (see feature article on page 14) significantly reduced the requirement for single deckers, releasing 36 buses, mostly Bristol L types. Indeed, by the end of 1964, there would only be 6 L types left in normal service. The small class of Bristol SCs, totalling 22 buses, was also withdrawn completely in the first half of 1964.

Summer Allocation

The total number of vehicles allocated to the companies garages on July 1st is recorded below. The totals in brackets are the winter figures (January 1st) included for purposes of comparison.

Brentwood	63 (55)	Canvey	8 (8)
Braintree	39 (37)	Halstead	23 (20)
Basildon	88 (78)	Hadleigh	43 (43)
Bishops Cleeve	19 (17)	Kelvedon	27 (37)
Chelmsford	90 (92)	Maldon	28 (30)
Clacton	71 (44)	Southend	159 (127)
Colchester	50 (43)	London (Wood Green)	14 (17)
Total Fleet Strength		726 (719)	

Above: Was this the peak of Eastern National's operations and fleet? In News Sheet 7 we included this table showing the total allocation of vehicles by depot. Southend's total includes coaches based at Prittlewell. Contract work occupied a significant part of the fleet, using 29 vehicles in June, rising to 34 in November.

Looking at the traffic requirement (PVR), as of the July allocation sheet, this totalled 670, made up as follows:

Division	Depots	DD bus	Open top	SD crew	SD OMO	Coach / DP	DD DP	Total
Southern	SD, HH, BN, CY	165	6	23	4	50	7	255
Central	CF, BS, MN, WG, BD	120		27	14	26		187
Northern	KN, BE, CR, HD, CN	103	5	28	24	36		196
Total – bus/coach operations		388	11	78	42	112	7	638
Rail replacement services		2		1				3
Contract work		3		4		21	1	29
Grand total PVR		393	11	83	42	133	8	670

EN were operating from a wide range of depots as this list from a contemporary timetable book shows, although even this is not a complete list, as there were other premises at Brightlingsea (outstation for 2 buses, see page 18) and in Southend, where the Tylers Avenue garage/terminus was closed in July 1964 and replaced by the new Seaway bus/coach station. We told the story of Tylers Avenue in EBM Extra 3 (Spring 2023) and with a photo in Extra 4 (Autumn 2023).



OMNIBUS COMPANY LTD.
HEAD OFFICES
 NEW WRITTLE STREET, CHELMSFORD
 Telephone—Chelmsford 3431 (7 lines)
 Telex—1996

(For All Chelmsford Area Traffic Enquiries—Telephone 3104)

AREA ADMINISTRATION

Northern—Queen Street, Colchester

Central—Omnibus Station, Duke Street, Chelmsford

Southern—17/21 London Road, Southend-on-Sea

{ 'Phone 71451/4
 Telex 1850
 'Phone 3104/5
 { 'Phone 49411
 Telex 1997

LOCAL OFFICES AND DEPOTS

BASILDON NEW TOWN	Cherrydown (Telex 1927)—Laindon 1431/2	
BISHOPS STORTFORD	South Street	Bishops Stortford 2476
BRAINTREE	Fairfield Rd.	Braintree 1697/8
BRENTWOOD	3 High Street	Brentwood 387
	North Road	Brentwood 1204
CANVEY ISLAND	Leigh Beck	Canvey 47
CHELMSFORD	Omnibus Station Duke St.	Chelmsford 3104/5
CLACTON-ON-SEA	Omnibus Stn., Jackson Road	
	and Pier Avenue ... (Telex 1875)—Clacton 944/5	
COLCHESTER	Queen St. and Omnibus Station	(Telex 1850)— Colchester 71451/4
DOVERCOURT	Kingsway	Harwich 2866
HADLEIGH	35 London Road	Southend 558421
HALSTEAD	High Street	Halstead 2487
HARLOW	29 High Street	Harlow 2264
KELVEDON	High Street	Kelvedon 306
MALDON	Omnibus Stn., High St. ...	Maldon 265
SILVER END	Boar's Tye Road	Silver End 10
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA	17/21 London Road ... (Telex 1997)—Southend 49411	
	Pier Hill Coach Station ...	Southend 49411
WALTON-ON-NAZE	Omnibus Stn., High St. ...	Walton 69
WEST MERSEA	High Street	West Mersea 17

(In HARLOW NEW TOWN information as to the Company's Services is available at the London Transport Enquiry Office at the Bus Station.)

LONDON

"Eastern National" Coach Station, Air Terminal & Travel Agency, 250 Pentonville Road
 King's Cross, N.1. 'Phone BRUnswick 6902. Telex 27873.

"Eastern National" Wood Green Coach Station,
 725, Lordship Lane, N.22. 'Phone BOWes Park 4218

Particulars of the Company's London Services may also be obtained at the Central Enquiry
 Bureau, London Coastal Coaches Ltd., Victoria Coach Station, Buckingham Palace Road,
 S.W.1. 'Phone SLOane 0202.

Troubled times?

1964 was a year of very low unemployment, an average rate of just 1.7% across the year, meaning that recruiting staff for work in areas like the bus industry, with its shift working, unsocial hours and relatively low pay, was difficult and staff turnover was high. Staff shortages were a regular feature, partly covered by crews working substantial amounts of overtime. Conductor shortages were a particular problem. The picture varied from depot to depot, but a random story from the Basildon Standard of 29 May paints a picture. Under the headline

NEW TOWN FACES BUS CRISIS, the article quoted an EN spokesman speaking from the Company's Headquarters at Chelmsford:

"The situation is worse now than it has ever been. Being 10 per cent short means that one-tenth of our duties are not being covered every day. With rest days to be fixed in and, at this time of year, holidays and express service work, the situation has reached a stage when it is physically impossible to operate full services" he said.

"Is more money the answer? he was asked. He replied "The pay problem is a bit of a myth although it is fair to say that at this time, when Ford's and Standard Telephones are recruiting staff in Basildon, we are facing strong competition from industry. If bus drivers and conductors could get housing in the New Town the problem would soon solve itself".

The advert right perhaps highlights the issues - the quoted earnings include 14 hours of overtime on top of the 42-hour week.

Industrial unrest was also a feature of the year, with a number of disputes, threatened stoppages and actual short strikes.

The following few years were to be no better, sadly!

EASTERN NATIONAL

VACANCIES

at

BASILDON DEPOT

for

CONDUCTORS

Free Uniform Travel Concessions Paid Holidays

AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS
£17.19.0 for 56 Hours

Base starting rate for a 42-hour week is CONDUCTORS £18.9.0 rising to £11.2.0 plus additional pay for week-end work

APPLY: Local Traffic Superintendent, Basildon Depot

EN A.D.P.285 854

EASTERN NATIONAL

X43

Express Coach Service

SOUTHEND, WESTCLIFF,

Basildon, Chelmsford, Royston,

BOSTON, PETERBOROUGH, SKEGNESS

PERIOD OF OPERATION —Saturdays only in July and August.

Southend-on-Sea, Pier Hill Coach Station	dep.	7.15	a.m.
Westcliff-on-Sea, London Road, opp. Mascot Cinema	arr.	7.23	
Lough-on-Sea, London Road, Elm Hotel	arr.	7.28	
Hadleigh, Church	arr.	7.33	
Hadleigh, E.N. Depot	arr.	7.34	
South Benfleet, Tarpots Corner	arr.	7.40	
Pritae, Broadway, Century Cinema	arr.	7.45	
Basildon, Town Centre	arr.	7.53	
Billericay, High Street (Post Office)	arr.	8.4	
Galleyswood, The Eagle	arr.	8.20	
Chelmsford, Omnibus Station	arr.	8.30	
Royston, Bus Station	arr.	8.59	
Peterborough, Bus Station	arr.	11.29	
Boston, Wide Barge, Red Cow	dep.	11.31	
Skegness, Lawn Motor Park	arr.	1.50	p.m.
Skegness, Butlins Holiday Camp	arr.	3.0	

Skegness, Butlins Holiday Camp	dep.	4.10	p.m.
Skegness, Lawn Motor Park	dep.	5.5	
Boston, Wide Barge, Red Cow	dep.	6.29	
Peterborough, Bus Station	dep.	6.45	
Royston, Bus Station	dep.	8.0	
Chelmsford, Omnibus Station	dep.	8.30	
Galleyswood, The Eagle	dep.	9.39	
Billericay, High Street (Post Office)	dep.	9.55	
Basildon, Town Centre	dep.	10.6	
Pritae, Broadway, Century Cinema	dep.	10.14	
South Benfleet, Tarpots Corner	dep.	10.19	
Hadleigh, E.N. Depot	dep.	10.26	
Hadleigh, Church	dep.	10.31	
Lough-on-Sea, London Road, Elm Hotel	dep.	10.36	
Westcliff-on-Sea, London Road, opp. Mascot Cinema	dep.	10.41	
Southend-on-Sea, Pier Hill Coach Station	dep.	10.44	

Summer seasonal express services were an important part of EN's operations, although increasingly, resourcing them was to stretch staffing as referred to above. Each route was publicised by an A5 sized leaflet, in a variety of different colours. Publicity was often issued well in advance of the season, the print code on this example being dated 15 October 1963, ready for the 1964 season.

X43 linked south and central Essex to the delights of Skegness, but how many would enjoy the five and three-quarter hour journey from Southend, with just one comfort break of 15 minutes in Royston?

For the full journey from the Southend area, the adult fare was 40/- (£2) for a period return.

Optimistically, a day return fare was also offered for 23/- (£1.15) but with just an hour at the resort, it's difficult to see many being sold.

**FOR DETAILS OF SERVICES TO OTHER
 BUTLINS CAMPS & HOTELS
 SEE LEAFLETS FOR**

X20 BRIGHTON

X24, X34 MARGATE

X30 BOGNOR REGIS

X27, X32, X33, X34, X42 CLACTON

Book your BUTLINS Holiday at any E.N. Office or Agency

I Was There - Some Personal Memories of 1964

Richard Delahoy - a fascination for timetables

What first sparked your interest in and enthusiasm for the bus industry? For some it was fairly obvious - the bus ride to school, the services passing your front door, parents or relatives working in the industry, and so on. For me, none of the above applied - my junior and senior schools were no more than half a mile from home, no buses penetrated Eastbourne Grove in Westcliff, although they did pass either end of our road, and I didn't know anyone who worked on the buses. About the only direct stimulus would have been when our mother took my younger brother and I to Leigh on the 21 or into Westcliff or Southend on the 6 or 6A. Yet at an early age I was fascinated by timetables, routes, scheduling and the like. Worryingly and frustratingly, I have very few memories at all of my childhood, but one memory is of designing timetables for bus routes from the top of our garden (alternately from the garden shed or from the French windows of the dining room) to the bottom of the garden. I even made destination blinds with brown paper to fit to a pedal car - unfortunately they didn't work well, as I soon discovered that none of the thin bamboo sticks used for gardening which I purloined for the rollers were actually straight! Another key memory is of reading the Southend & District Joint Services timetable book for April 1964, with its salmon cover. I was only eight at the time that it came out and it's the earliest timetable I can recall studying whilst it was still current. Today my collection includes timetables going back to the 1920s but obviously I've only studied those older ones after the event. This book reflected what I could see around my home town in real time.



So what gems did it contain? Was it well designed and informative? Was it value for money for its 6d cover price? At the age of eight I couldn't answer those questions but looking back subsequently, I think it was close to perfection in timetable design. First, there's the size - 4.5" x 6" - ideal to slip into your pocket or handbag. The 208 pages weigh in at just over four ounces, not too excessive. Open the cover and inside there's a list of the changes being introduced in this issue - a really helpful feature. The usual contact details are followed by a list of services, then the customary index to places served. A full list of EN depots is included, for those travelling beyond the 96 square miles or so of the Southend Co-Ordination Area.

Jumping ahead, there's a really good map folded inside the rear cover. For the majority of the Southend Borough, this is a full street map and very easy to follow, although it didn't go further east than Bournes Green. On the flip side is a plan showing the bus routes across the whole of the wider Co-ordination Area but not other roads, so perhaps a little harder to follow. But not to fear, most (but not all) of the timetables inside include a complete road-by-road description of the routes. Those road-by-road descriptions don't include services

extending beyond the boundary, like the 2 to Grays, 11 to Chelmsford or 151/251 to London. But curiously, a couple of Co-ordination routes *don't* have descriptions, including the trunk 1 to Rayleigh, and yet cross-boundary 26, Canvey to Romford, does get a full description. So one mark dropped for inconsistency! The 151/251 also don't explain the limited number of stops that buses call at inside the LT area, but to be fair, that is covered in EN's much bigger book. The X10 timetable also omits the short workings between Basildon and Kings Cross.

The timetables themselves are in a conventional format and with plenty of intermediate timing points. The bus industry hasn't yet embraced the 24-hour clock (see feature box on the inside rear cover), so this book shows AM times in standard type and PM in heavier type, without resorting to the fussy am and pm column headings that some operators favoured. There are composite tables to show in summary form all buses along the key corridors like the London Road (A13) and Eastwood Road to Rayleigh. The London Road table shows an impressive 14 buses an hour during the day Monday to Saturday from Victoria Circus to Thundersley. Today, perhaps surprisingly, there's a similar offering Monday to Friday (slightly less frequent on Saturdays).

And all this for a 6d cover price - that's 2.5p in decimal currency, equivalent to about 45p in 2023's money.

Richard's rating? 9/10.

Nicolas Collins - the Colchester scene in '64

Colchester Corporation Transport celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1964 having begun operations in July 1904 with a small system of trams which had been replaced by buses by 1929. An exhibition covering development of the Undertaking was held in the Castle Museum, a commemorative booklet issued and a decorated bus, AEC Regent No.22 operated on each route in October (see picture below). The previous five years had been difficult following a major revision to services in 1959 with reductions in frequencies. These were generally restored in 1961. The introduction of an experimental one-way traffic system around the town centre in April 1963 which was later confirmed permanent resulted in further revisions to services which were introduced in July 1964.

I had joined CCT in August 1960 following an interview with the General Manager, J. Gray and Traffic Superintendent, W.L. Watson. Mr. Gray had previously been at Oldham and Lincoln whilst Mr. Watson had been a conductor on the Ribble and held administrative posts at Darwen and Coventry. I was soon involved in compiling timetables as well as several daily routine jobs. I shared an office room with the Traffic Superintendent which was on the first floor and overlooked the original tram shed, then known as No.1 Garage. There were times when it became somewhat noisy together with some unpleasant fumes when a bus engine was tested nearby.

The traffic section initiated the bus allocation for the day and late in the afternoon one of us would consult with the Rolling Stock Superintendent and the Works Foreman to determine those buses required by the Garage Workshop for the next day. We would allocate buses to the various workings on a last in/first out basis to complete a bus allocation sheet. It rarely stayed unaltered overnight as the garage staff would have to deal with any defects or perhaps declare a bus unfit. Running numbers were used but not displayed on the vehicles e.g. 1/1, 1/2 etc and the peak specials were lettered e.g. A,B,C etc.



Left: an event we inexplicably failed to cover in our News Sheets at the time was the repainting/decorating of AEC Regent 22 (194 MNO) in this special livery to mark the 60th anniversary of the undertaking. 22 ran for a week in early October 1964, spending a day on each of the town's main routes, seen here on the Greenstead Estate in **Trevor Brookes'** shot.

I became involved in route planning, e.g. into new developments. Monkwick estate off the Mersea Road was nearing completion and the Greenstead development was starting. This would take me out of the office with the

General Manager for meetings with highways engineers and police representatives to agree safe routes and bus stops. The GM insisted the meeting was followed up by confirmation letters with the representatives.

Another job was to be Minutes Clerk for the Works Committee - a regular meeting between management and employee representatives. The discussions were often lively and sometimes I would be asked to leave the meeting - the item was obviously not fit for my ears.

Bus fleet renewals had taken place regularly over the years and 1964 saw the replacement of the last two utility Bristol K6As Nos. 46 and 47 which were new in 1945 and one of the AEC Regent 2s, No.53. They were replaced by three more Leyland Titans PD2A/30Spl. with Massey 61 seat bodies, which were to be the last of the 7ft. 6ins. wide buses to be taken into the fleet. In future, 8ft. wide buses would have to be acquired which would cause accommodation problems particularly in the original tramshed.

The fleet at the end of 1964 comprised 42 buses:

5	1-5	Daimler CVD6/Roberts
5	6-9, 55	Crossley DD42/Crossley (6-9) or Massey (55)
6	10-12, 51/2/4	AEC Regent II (51/2/4) or III (10-12)/Massey
11	13-23	AEC Regent V/Massey
15	24-38	Leyland PD2 (24-28) or PD2A (29-38)/Massey

The staff employed in the Transport Department was 189 which included 70 drivers and 75 conductors but there was a shortage of 10 drivers and 5 conductors at the year end. There was no one man operation.

One of the main benefits of working for a small transport undertaking was knowledge gained across the operation. I stayed a further ten years until 1974 but returned in 1976 as Traffic Superintendent.



Above: seen when brand new, in June 1964, 36 (CWC 36B) was one of the three Leyland PD2As delivered in this "cream sandwich" livery - the traditional style can be seen on the bus behind, in Colchester bus station. The upper Tuscan red panels/roof were later painted cream. These 3 buses replaced the last two utility deckers, Bristol K6As 46/7 of 1945 and 53, one of the 1947 AEC Regents. 46 was illustrated on the cover of EBMX-2. **Trevor Brookes**

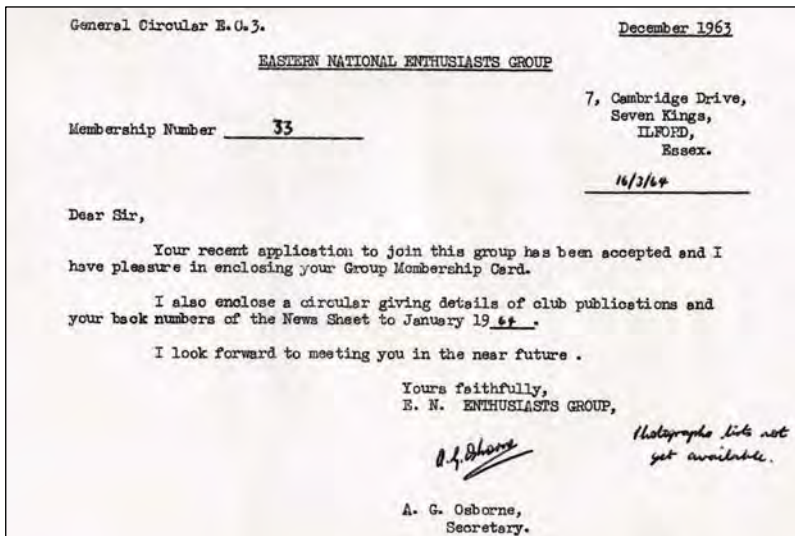
Alan "Tebzy" Tebbit - a lifelong career starts

I commenced my employment with Eastern National on the 5th of August 1964, as a junior clerk in the traffic department, in head office. As readers will recall, my history with the company goes back much further, as I spent a lot of my childhood travelling with my father on his bus. My memories of 1964 are of a very mundane office job, although, as the most junior in the office, I was sent out on errands, most of which involved taking inter depot mail to the bus station, for onward dispatch, taking me to my favourite environment. As I've told in various tales, in subsequent years I progressed to conducting and then driving. But it all started in '64!

Brian Ashley - member 33

1964 was a year I fondly remember, when I joined the Eastern National Enthusiasts Group (ENEG), as it was then called, very soon after Alan Osborne had founded the group, and I became one of their early members. In an old box file that I had hoarded away various bus documents, I discovered the original letter that Alan had posted to me on the 16th March 1964 confirming my membership, as illustrated here.

With Alan's persuasion, I held one or two meetings in 1964/5 at my first house in Exford Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea together with a handful of us early members, which I seem to recall included Alan of course, John Taylor and possibly Derek Giles, all of whom were much more knowledgeable than me about buses.



It became so helpful receiving the monthly newsletters detailing new or withdrawn buses and allocations and any other news of the various Essex based bus companies. How Alan managed to discover and document such news in those days without the Internet is absolutely amazing and a credit to him for all the work he put in for our benefit. Before joining the group, I was very much alone in happily driving around mostly in the Southend area in search of something interesting to photograph, but without much knowledge of worthwhile up-and-coming events.

Having been born in Arundel Gardens, just off Kenilworth Gardens in Westcliff in January 1942, I have very fond memories of my early childhood bus interest, having used Westcliff Motor Services' red buses on route 17 to take me to school and also Southend Corporation's blue trolleybuses either in Fairfax Drive or up Nelson Road to London Road and down to Southend on their circular route 28A or 28B. Unfortunately, Southend's trams were all withdrawn in April 1942, when I was just 4 months old, so I was slightly too young to have become a tram enthusiast at such a tender age, but I do have many photos and postcards of the trams to enable me to visualise them in service and to wish that I had had the opportunity to ride in them (maybe I did, when I was a baby, who knows?!). I did, however, fondly remember the brown and cream buses and coaches of City Coach Company going through Victoria Circus and the High Street to and from Tylers Avenue, their garage and bus depot. Sad though, that they were absorbed into Westcliff MS in 1952 and Westcliff were in turn absorbed into Eastern National finally and legally in January 1955. So the lovely brown or red buses that I was very fond of gradually got repainted in EN's green, which was a great disappointment to me at the time.

Coming forward to the year 1964, I have delved back through my black and white negs taken during that year, which happily remind me of buses in service at that time, but more especially my various visits to the local bus garages. In those days, I would just turn up at a garage and ask permission to enter, if possible, to take a few photos, which invariably they allowed me to do. Perhaps my face became familiar to some of the garage staff. In particular, Derek Giles as Southend Corporation's superintendent was always very helpful, as were the staff at Southend's maintenance depot at Tickfield Avenue (formerly Tunbridge Avenue, I believe). One person I remember there was Jock Hogg (I seem to recall that name), who was a maintenance manager in an upstairs office and was happy to discuss their buses in general, whilst allowing me to roam in the garage to take photos and also in their yard, where withdrawn vehicles were often stored, some being robbed for spares to keep some of the older buses on the road.

My favourite visits were to Eastern National's (formerly Westcliff) Prittlewell garage in Fairfax Drive, where likewise they allowed me to take photos either in the garage or in the adjacent yard. They would even occasionally shunt one or two buses around in the storage depot or out in the yard, especially for me to take some ideal shots. Of course, Health & Safety wasn't such a big issue in those days and I was so grateful that they offered me such a lot of trust. Just occasionally, I would drive over to Maldon to photograph some of the withdrawn EN buses out in their yard, which at that time was where many of EN's



withdrawn buses from their various garages were taken and dumped before their actual disposal. Apart from the company removing their fleet numbers, garage code plates and fleet names, they used to overpaint any cream bands of double deckers in dark red, to show that they were no longer in service. **Above:** one of Brian's Maldon pictures from the summer of '64, 1257 (FPU 512) and 1274 (JW 430), both then still in service soon to be 2200/1.

So, those are just a few of my recollections. I have witnessed a phenomenal increase in the quality of the EBN/Ms, from those early days of Alan's hand-typed newsletters through to today's magazines in full colour, something that just wouldn't have been possible back in 1964. We tend to take today's technology for granted, quite naturally, but without Alan's sterling work for the group right from the beginning and continuing to this day, and the many members who have offered their valuable services over the years, the great success of the group would not have been possible. So, I offer my grateful thanks as a 'lowly' member to all those who have worked so hard to achieve such fantastic results and wish the group every success in all its future endeavours.

Below: the sole CBC-fitted Bristol LD in the EN fleet, 2458 (320 GPU) at Westcliff High Schools in August 1964, freshly renumbered (see page 22) on Brian's local route 17. **Brian Ashley**



Tribute to the pioneers

We are delighted to pay tribute to five people who joined ENEG in 1964 and who are still members today:

Alan Osborne (Founder), Martin Weyell (M10), Philip Ayres (M24), Brian Ashley (M33) and David Harman (M34).

Thank you all for sixty years of support for ENEG/EBEG!

The Southend Co-Ordination Area was also to see many changes, affecting 37 routes with a number of new cross-town links created by joining up previously separate routes, including extending the 3/3A over the 5A route to give a through Shoebury - Southend - Hadleigh - Benfleet - Canvey service.

The changes are too numerous to list here and stretched from Wood Green, Romford, Tilbury Ferry and Southend to Braintree, Great Bardfield, Colchester, Wivenhoe and Clacton, as shown on the sketch map in the explanatory leaflet on the previous page. The new pattern of services was subsequently tweaked in April 1965 and, of course, many times since.

Publicity for the service changes caused some problems, as the headline MORE TIMETABLES TO END CONFUSION in the Basildon Standard of 23 May 1964 reported. The company responded, a spokesman at the Basildon depot told a reporter, "We had a hundred copies of the revised tables in this week, they went like wildfire". An Eastern National public relations man at Chelmsford commented, "Sales of the revised time-table have been phenomenal. We printed 12,000, twice the normal number, but it still was not enough". The story concluded by noting that "the company are to print more copies". Subsequently a second version of the Basildon local timetable book was issued in June.

Summer express services were still prosperous at this time and their progressive improvement continued, including extending the London to Southend coach/air service, now numbered X1, from Kings Cross to Victoria and in Southend from the Airport to Pier Hill to connect with Eagle Steamers to Calais for Ostend and Paris. The 1964 express service map shows the network extending from Bournemouth and the Isle of Wight in the south, to Derby, Skegness, Cambridge and Great Yarmouth to the north, in many cases joint with other operators. But the most important change to the express services came from the opening of the Dartford Tunnel, as explained in a separate article on pages 26 & 27.

In Southend, the new Seaway terminal replaced Tylers Avenue garage as the terminus for the 151 & 251 from July (see EBM Extra 3, Spring 2023, for the Tylers Avenue story) but express services continued to use the Pier Hill Coach Station, although the X10 was transferred to Seaway in 1967 as seen in this photo from the **Derrick Rudland collection** that highlights the relatively limited passenger shelter at this terminus in a corner of the Council's car park. 2600 (184 XNO) was one of 3 original FLF coaches new in 1962. Note the rear luggage compartment.



Southend Transport in 1964

Southend Corporation Transport enjoyed a largely uneventful and stable 1964. After the influx of ten new Albion/Leyland Lowlanders in 1963, there were no additions to the fleet, but orders were placed for a dozen Leyland Titan PD3/6s with Massey *highbridge* bodies which were in build towards the end of the year, with delivery of the first two just after the year-end, 334/40 coming in January 1965. We illustrated one of the batch inside the front cover of the previous Extra (Autumn 2023). Interestingly, SCT specified open rear platforms for these, following delays in boarding caused by the front entrances of the Lowlanders. All other Southend deckers at that time had rear entrances.

No buses were withdrawn, making 1964 the first year since 1947 when there were no movements in or out, something that would never be repeated again. The fleet stood at 84, comprising:

4	200-2/5	Albion Aberdonian/Weymann
2	206/7	Leyland Leopard/Weymann
10	230-3/5, 265-9	Daimler CW/Massey - all rebodied; 265-9 on chassis ex London Transport
5	242/4-7	Daimler CW open top, with utility bodies by Park Royal (242/7) or Duple
6	257-62	AEC Regent III/Massey
35	276-310	Leyland PD2/Massey (276-80, 287-98, 305-10) or Weymann (281-6, 299-304)
6	311-6	Leyland PD3/Massey
6	317-22	AEC Bridgemaster/Park Royal
10	323-32	Leyland Lowlander/Alexander

All the closed top double deckers up to 316 were lowbridge models with a sunken side gangway upstairs. Also still around was 203, a 1931 AEC Regal in use as a driver trainer and Daimler CW 270, a uniform store and conductor training school.

Perhaps the most significant change to the fleet was a revision to the livery. Hitherto, double deckers had blue on the sides of the roof (starting one bay back from the front), which carried down the rear dome in a swoop, plus a deep cream area around and below the windows and a full fleetname SOUTHEND CORPORATION TRANSPORT on the sides. It was decided to update this and on 24 February 1964, 301 (MHJ 923) was taken into the Tunbridge Avenue works. The paint shop record book explains the story:

"Exterior cleaned and prepared, filled where necessary. Different styles of livery then painted on the exterior and a final style accepted by the management. This style was carried out in Vulcans cream and Williamsons blue. No S.C.T. transfers are now to be applied". The bus was then released to traffic on 28 February.

Sadly there is no record of what the various different styles were and whether any were radical changes (probably not). Buses continued to display the town crest which now included SOUTHEND-ON-SEA in small gold lettering underneath, as seen in this photo **below**, taken some years later.



The two photos **opposite** taken by **Paul Bateson** in September 1964 nicely show both the livery variations and the different styles of the Massey and Weymann bodies on the Leyland PD2s.

Top, 302 (MHJ 924, Weymann) at Thorpe Bay Corner shows the old style, contrasting **bottom** with 278 (HJN 838, Massey, repainted in May) at Southend Victoria Station. Note also how the Weymann bodies had an outward opening cab door but the Massey version used the more common (at SCT) sliding variety.

Southend's operations were restricted to the Co-ordination Agreement area of 96 square miles, set up from 1955 as a joint operation between SCT and Eastern National. SCT buses could be found across almost the whole of that area, with the mileage split 37% SCT to 63% EN. Hence the major service revisions introduced in April impacted SCT too (see article on pages 14 & 15 and also the timetable book reviewed on page 9).



Contrasting liveries and body styles: captions on left-hand page



Rail Replacement

The 1960s were notorious for the extensive railway closures under British Railways' then Chairman, Dr Richard Beeching.

1964 saw some significant closures in Essex, all resulting in new bus services. This is not the place to debate the rights and wrongs of the Beeching era closures, made under a strong mandate from Government to reduce or eliminate the railway's massive and escalating losses, and without the benefit of hindsight. But we can look at the three 1964 closures that impacted bus service provision in Essex.

The first line to close, from 15 June 1964, was the short branch off the Clacton line from Wivenhoe to Brightlingsea. It had been served by a shuttle service to/from Colchester. Eastern National's existing 78/A services were augmented by a new limited stop 74, Brightlingsea to Colchester Bus Station, running M-F peaks and Saturdays, plus a solitary M-F peak trip to/from Wivenhoe station. Later most 74/74A trips were extended through to North Station in Colchester for main line connections.

Bob Beaumont was on hand to capture the first Saturday of the new service, 20 June 1964, here in the hands of brand-new Bristol FLF 1675 (BVX 672B). Allocated to Colchester (CR), in practice we believe it was outstationed at one of EN's more obscure depots, the small shed in Victoria Place, Brightlingsea which didn't even merit a mention in the list of premises in timetable books (as reproduced on page 7). It normally housed two double deckers (the other one being 1673 at this time) but closed in July 1967.



Moving south to mid-Essex, another closure affected the Witham to Maldon East line, closing from 7 September 1964. Again EN already ran between those points, in this case with the 335, but didn't directly serve the intermediate stations (halts, really) so the closure consent required a new limited stop service 99, stopping only near the closed stations and running only at Monday to Friday peaks and on Saturday afternoons.

SERVICE 99		MALDON (East Stn.) — HEYBRIDGE — LANGFORD — WICKHAM BISHOPS — WITHAM (Rly. Stn.)																SERVICE 99																	
Light figures denote A.M. times																		Dark figures denote P.M. times																	
Mondays to Fridays (except Bank Holidays)																																			
Maldon, East Station Road	dep	6 50	7 32	8 17	.....	5 8	5 50	6 32	.....	Witham, Railway Station	dep	7 11	7 55	8 40	.....	5 29	6 11	6 53	.....																
Heybridge, Square	.....	6 52	7 34	8 19	.....	5 10	5 52	6 34	.....	Wickham Bishops Halt	.....	7 19	8 3	8 48	.....	5 37	6 19	7 1	.....																
Langford and Ulling Hale	.....	6 55	7 37	8 22	.....	5 13	5 55	6 37	.....	Langford and Ulling Hale	.....	7 24	8 8	8 53	.....	5 42	6 24	7 6	.....																
Wickham Bishops Halt	.....	7 0	7 42	8 27	.....	5 16	6 0	6 42	.....	Heybridge, Square	.....	7 27	8 11	8 56	.....	5 45	6 26	7 8	.....																
Witham, Rly. Stn.	arr	7 8	7 50	8 35	.....	5 24	6 8	6 50	.....	Maldon, East Station	.....	7 29	8 13	8 58	.....	5 47	6 29	7 11	.....																
BUSES WILL STOP ONLY AT POINTS SET OUT IN TIME TABLE.																		*Extended to Maldon, Bus Station, arr. 2 minutes later.																	



Area Office :
CAMPS ROAD
HAVERHILL
2138

Head Office :
15 MARKET HILL
CAMBRIDGE
53527

Area Office :
14 HILL STREET
SAFFRON WALDEN
3374

NEW SERVICE 59

HAVERHILL—SAFFRON WALDEN—
AUDLEY END STATION
via CASTLE CAMPS and ASHDON
(Replacement Service for
Bartlow—Audley End Railway Line)

Commencing
MONDAY, 7th SEPTEMBER, 1964
and until further notice

Showing journeys operated by Messrs. F. C. Moore Ltd.
(Viceroy Coaches) and Eastern National Omnibus Co. Ltd.,
Service 301, and principal rail connections with London
(Liverpool Street) and Cambridge

Finally, in the north-west of the county, trains were taken off the line between Audley End (on the Cambridge main line) and Bartlow (in the middle of nowhere, on the Cambridge - Haverhill - Sudbury - Marks Tey line) via Saffron Walden, also from 7 September. In this case, Premier Travel introduced a new service 59 (Haverhill - Audley End station) and Viceroy provided short workings between Saffron Walden and Audley End station.

A problem with these - and indeed, almost all rail replacement services of this era, was that they usually only ran to and from rail stations, even when those stations were not well located, and were not properly integrated with existing services. For example, Maldon East was actually almost in Heybridge, away from Maldon town centre and much of the local housing. How much more sensible if the bus service had continued to and from the bus station, but no (apart from a depot run positioning journey). The rail buses were subsidised by the British Transport Commission and those believing in conspiracy theories will suggest that only serving (badly located) stations was all part of the plan to doom the services to failure, despite in many cases the BTC also owning the local bus company. All the more surprising then that Brightlingsea service 74 actually ran to Colchester Bus Station, presumably because that was the most convenient terminus close to St Botolph's station that the trains had served.

Perhaps not surprisingly, most of these dedicated rail replacement routes withered away quite quickly. The 99 was latterly reduced to just two morning trips M-F and was

withdrawn at the beginning of January 1970. At Brightlingsea, from January 1971 the limited stop trips became 478 and were shown combined in the 53/78 timetable; they mostly only ran at M-F peaks, but the limited stop trips ceased by May 1973, becoming normal stopping service 78A. However, the Premier Travel 59 continued and still exists today, having only given up that route number as recently as July 2022 when Essex CC altered the number to 319 as part of the latest tender round.

One hope of saving loss-making branch lines was to use railbuses – built largely by bus manufacturers such as Bristol/ECW and AEC/Park Royal. They were not the saviour that some had hoped for. A number are preserved, including W79978, built by AC Cars, seen on the Colne Valley Railway at Great Yeldham in 2009. Today it is based at the Swindon & Cricklade Railway.

Richard Delahoy



The New Registration System - "B" time

You'll notice that all the buses new in 1964 featured in this magazine have B suffix registrations. It's not always appreciated that the situation in Essex (and Staffordshire) was a major factor in the timing of the new system coming in. Vehicle registrations started in 1904 as a result of the Motor Car Act of 1903. Every County Council and County Borough was allocated one mark of either one or two letters - Essex received F - in what looked to be a haphazard order but was actually ranked in order of population size. The initial series ran from A (London) to FP (Rutland).

Of course, these got used up quickly, and in addition new county boroughs were being created - eg Southend in 1914, who were allocated HJ and (later) JN. So further two letter code letters were issued as required, Essex progressing from F through HK (3/15), NO (1/21), PU (7/23), TW (9/25), VW (6/27), VX (5/29) and EV (3/31). As is well known, once the two-letter series were used up, a system started of using a letter prefix to the location code and then up to three numbers, so for example once Southend reached JN 9999 at the end of 1937, they continued with AHJ 1 to 999 and so on. Once those were used up, reversed sequences were then started, so Southend went from YJN 999 in May 1961 to 1000 HJ.

But still the numbers were running out! Essex was given further two-letter marks that had been omitted previously to avoid confusion or offence - OO (9/61) and WC (7/62). That bought some time, but it was clear that a new system was needed and the decision was made to increase from six characters to seven, with the final one being a year identifier letter. Whilst it is generally thought that this started with A from 1 January 1963, in practice the implementation was phased in over 1963 and 1964. The very first A plate was a Middlesex issue, AHX 1A, on 18 February 1963. In fact, only 14 authorities issued A suffixes (more have done so in more recent times for re-registrations and in DVLA auctions of personalised plates). Essex adopted the new system from November 1963 and Southend from May 1964 (so Southend didn't issue A suffixes). Eastern National were affected by the change, the last three FLFs to be delivered in 1963 (1665-7, later 2788-90) were intended to be 727-9 WWC but didn't enter service until January 1964, instead becoming AVX 956-8B. Similarly, registrations LWC 870-6 and 939-45 LWC which had been reserved for EN, were voided. RELHs 579/80 were actually delivered as 940/1 LWC but were altered to AVX 962/3B.

Initially the year suffixes were based on calendar years, but that didn't suit the motor trade and the phasing of new car sales, so E only ran from January to July 1967, with F starting on 1 August 1968 to 31 July 1969.

Essex acquired even more marks as a result of the centralisation and rationalisation of licencing offices in October 1974, gaining HJ and JN from the now-closed Southend office and AR from Hertfordshire.

The system changed again as the year suffixes were used up, moving instead to a year *prefix* from August 1983 and then to the current, confusing, system from September 2001, where the first two letters are the area identifier, the next two numbers are a year code and then there are three random letters. It was probably at this point that most of us gave up trying to understand or follow the system! It certainly ended the days when you could look at a bus registration and often identify the operator - "CD" would usually be Southdown, "FM" Crosville, for example.

The Essex identifier letters in the current series are EA to EY, but with many buses being registered by manufacturers, lessors or corporate HQs, few buses in Essex actually carry these letters, Stephensons being a notable exception.

So there you are. This is a simplified explanation of what was a complex and sometimes inconsistent yet fascinating system, but hopefully you now know why all 1964 bus and coach deliveries mentioned here have a B suffix.

If you'd like to know more, the following books are recommended:

The Number Plate Book, John Harrison - Newby Books, 2019

A History of Motor Vehicle Registration in the UK, L H Newall - self-published, 1999

Date A Number - Autobus Review Publications, c.1971.



EN's first WC registrations were on FLFs new in November 1962. The rear registration number plate on FLFs was painted on translucent plastic, as seen **above**, from 2752.

New in '64 - What Did They Buy?

Eastern National and Tillings Travel (who were under EN control) had a total of 68 buses and coaches that entered service with 1964 "B" registration marks, one of the largest annual intakes to the fleet. The purchases comprised:

EASTERN NATIONAL						TILLINGS TRANSPORT		
Orig no	New no	Reg	Orig no	New no	Reg	Orig no	New no	Reg
Bristol FLF buses			Bristol MW coaches			Bristol MW coaches		
1665	2788	AVX 956B	599	365	BNO 115B	22	T328	BPU 22B
1666	2789	AVX 957B	600	366	BNO 116B	23	T329	BPU 23B
1667	2790	AVX 958B	601	367	BNO 117B	24	T330	BPU 24B
1668	2791	AVX 959B	Bristol RELH coaches			Bristol RELH coach		
1669	2792	AVX 960B	578	400	AVX 961B	18	T400	AOO 18B
1670	2793	BVX 667B	579	401	AVX 962B	Bedford SB coaches		
1673	2794	BVX 670B	580	402	AVX 963B	19	T503	19 POO
1674	2795	BVX 671B	581	403	AVX 964B	20	T504	BPU 20B
1675	2796	BVX 672B	582	404	AVX 965B	21	T505	BPU 21B
1676	2797	BVX 673B	583	405	AVX 966B			
1677	2787	BVX 674B	584	406	AVX 967B	Notes: “Orig no” shows the number for deliveries prior to the August 1964 renumbering, “New no” is that applied from August onwards. Some vehicles were subsequently modified and renumbered. The Tilling fleet above were allocated numbers where the numeric digits clashed with EN vehicles (eg T400 - AOO 18B clashed with 400 - AVX 961B). To resolve this, the Tilling fleet was renumbered in January 1966, still with a T prefix but without any duplication of then existing EN numbers. Those shown above became: T328-30 to T308-10 T400 to T440 T503-5 to T541-3.		
1678	2799	BVX 675B	Bristol RELH dual purpose					
1679	2800	BVX 676B	591	1600	BNO 101B			
1680	2801	BVX 677B	592	1601	BNO 102B			
1681	2802	BVX 678B	593	1602	BNO 103B			
1682	2803	BVX 679B	594	1603	BNO 104B			
1683	2804	BVX 680B	595	1604	BNO 105B			
	2805	BVX 681B	596	1605	BNO 106B			
	2806	BVX 682B	597	1606	BNO 107B			
	2807	BVX 683B	598	1607	BNO 108B			
	2808	FWC 426B	Bedford SB coaches					
	2809	FWC 427B	585	500	BNO 109B			
	2810	FWC 428B	586	501	BNO 110B			
	2811	FWC 429B	587	502	BNO 111B			
	2812	GNO 788B	588	503	BNO 112B			
	2813	GNO 789B	589	504	BNO 113B			
	2814	GNO 790B	590	505	BNO 114B			
	2815	GNO 791B	Bristol FLF dual purpose					
	2816	HEV 994B	1671	2606	BVX 668B			
	2817	HEV 995B	1672	2607	BVX 669B			
	2818	HEV 996B						
	2819	HEV 997B						

Colchester Borough Transport took just 3 buses, Leyland Titan PD2A/30Spl, Massey. They were built to 7' 6" width, hence the "Spl" in the chassis code, which is equivalent to the PD2A/31 model:

36	CWC 36B	37	CWC 37B	38	CWC 38B
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Southend Transport, having taken 10 Leyland/Albion Lowlanders in 1963, didn't buy any new buses in 1964.

The only brand-new vehicles for independents that were reported were a pair of Bedford VAL coaches with Duple bodies for Biss Brothers, EMH 820/1B. Osbornes of Tollesbury had GVX 658B, a Duple bodied AEC Reliance coach, but that entered service in January 1965.

Ipswich Corporation took AEC Regents 63/4, ADX 63/4B, also with Massey bodies.

Renumbering the Fleet - August 1964

Eastern National was established in 1930 and continued the inherited numbering system of the National Omnibus & Transport Co, where motor buses had been numbered sequentially from 2001 (in 1919). Initially EN and sister companies Southern National and Western National all carried on with this single series, as they had a common Head Office at 206 Brompton Road, London SW3. When the EN Head Office moved to Chelmsford the numbers had reached 3393 (which was a Southern National Dennis Dart - EN's highest number being 3335) and EN simply continued this sequence from 3394. SNOC & WNOC also continued from 3394 onwards but only for vehicles from operators acquired in their area, new deliveries starting a brand-new series (this is something of a simplification, the SNOC/WNOC numbering "system" is very hard to understand and explain, but well outside the scope of this article!).

This wasn't really a system at all, simply a numerical progression, since vehicle types couldn't be identified by their fleet numbers (except with a photographic memory!), so that similar vehicles had disparate numbers. It was further complicated by the many operators acquired in the mid-1930s, whose vehicles simply took the next available numbers. So for example, the Dennis Lancet single deck buses carried numbers 3317-21, 3394-423, 3473-92, 3513, 3530, 3532-55, 3584/5, 3686/7, 3694/5, 3756-8, 3799 & 3816/9.

This was all further complicated by the transfer of the Midland Section to United Counties in 1952 (leaving big holes in EN's numbering) and by EN taking control of Westcliff Motor Services (which by then included the City Coach Company and Benfleet & Canvey fleets) and then the forthcoming absorption of the Hicks fleet. Westcliff hadn't used fleet numbers at all - just referring to registration numbers - and City used an alpha-numeric system that at least identified types. Hence a complete renumbering was instituted in July 1954, with single decks numbered from 101 up (1-100 being reserved for subsequent second-hand acquisitions) and double decks from 1101 up (1001-1100 similarly being reserved for acquisitions). Within these two sequences, similar types were grouped together, eg all AEC double deckers were 1140 to 1174. This was fine as at the inception date but didn't work so well for single deckers as coaches and buses were mixed together, and as new vehicles were bought, with LS, MW and SC types jumbled up and acquired LS and MW coaches appearing in the second-hand sequence despite being standard with others already in the fleet.

Below: Delivered as 585 under the old scheme, BNO 109B became 500 from August. The half-dozen Bedford SBs (plus 3 for the Tillings fleet, who also had 3 earlier ones) were unusual purchases for a fleet highly standardised on Bristol/ECW products. These lightweight coaches had a decent life with EN, being withdrawn in October 1970. Here 500 is posed in Maldon Bus Station on a Group tour on 15 May 1966. **Alan Osborne.** Its fleetnumber plate is shown on page 24.



Enter Ian Kydd

Appointed Chief Engineer of EN from the start of 1963, Ian Kydd came from Lincolnshire Road Car (LRCC) where a slightly more logical system was in use (see feature box on the next page). But the LRCC scheme fell down when there were more than 100 vehicles of the same type, so Kydd devised a more logical system for EN in which coaches, single deck buses/DPs and double deckers were segregated and each type had its own batch of numbers starting with 00, with room to expand as more vehicles were bought. Within each series of numbers, vehicles were numbered sequentially in chassis number order, even where this upset registration number sequences. It's the system that most of us grew up with and appreciated/admired - so, for example, say "2471" and we'd immediately know that it was a Bristol LD Lodekka. Some series only had a few numbers used (the least was just 3) and one was rendered redundant before the scheme was implemented on 9 August 1964 as all the relevant buses - Bristol SCs - had been sold. Numbers 1100-6/9/12/5 and 2107 were in the event also not used as the relevant buses were withdrawn before the switch over date.

Here's the original allocation:

Coaches (single deck)		Buses & DP (single deck)		Buses & DP (double deck)	
100-3	Commer TS3	(1000-12)	Bristol SC	2000-19	Guy Arab
200-9	Bristol LL	1100-46	Bristol L/LL/LWL	2100-19	Leyland Titan
300-67	Bristol LS & MW	1200-47	Bristol LS	2200-70	Bristol K
400-6	Bristol RELH	1300-62	Bristol MW bus	2300-87	Bristol KS/KSW
500--5	Bedford SB	1400-31	Bristol MW DP	2400-2539	Bristol LD/LDL/FS
		(1500)*	Not yet used *	2600-7	Bristol FLF DP
		1600-7	Bristol RELH DP	2700-2804	Bristol FLF bus

Subsequent deliveries simply continued the relevant sequences, so that for example, the Bristol FLF bus series eventually reached 2946. * The 1500 series was presumably intended for three Bristol RELL buses that were on order for 1964 but were cancelled before delivery - they may have diverted to United instead (although there are 3 missing numbers in the ECW body numbering sequence). It was finally used for RELs from January 1969.

It was a simple and elegant system and stood the test of time, being easily expanded/adapted to reflect new types that couldn't have been envisaged in 1964. About the only anomaly was the inclusion of the solitary Bristol LDL Lodekka - a 70-seater - in the 60-seat LD/FS series; it was 2510 but perhaps ought to have been separate, although with a rear entrance, it would have been equally out of place in the FLF series. It might also have helped to have separated out closed top and open top buses in the 21xx series, perhaps with open toppers 2150 up?

The subsequent history of the numbering scheme is outside the scope of this article, in some cases seeing sequences reused for new types, and reached 45xx by 1985. 9xxx numbers were also later used, first for Tilling fleet coaches from January 1971 and later for buses converted to service vehicles.

The **Tilling** fleet had previously used the numbers from each vehicle's registration to identify the fleet, the company having been able to obtain suitable consecutive sequences, but was also brought into the EN scheme, with numbers starting with a T and then in series that corresponded to the EN scheme.

The initial Tilling scheme was:

Coaches (single deck)					
T300-30	Bristol LS & MW	T400	Bristol RELH	T500-5	Bedford SB

Unfortunately, this resulted in all the numeric digits clashing with existing EN vehicles and hence a further renumbering took place in January 1966 to eliminate the clashes with numbers then still in use. As an example, Tilling T330 (BPU 24B) had a duplicate number to EN's 330 (7016 HK) and both were Bristol MW coaches. T330 was then renumbered T310 in January 1966 as by then EN 310, an older LS coach (FJN 165), had been withdrawn. To complete this aside, the coach became EN 310 on transfer in February 1970, and was later rebuilt as a bus in October 1974, becoming 1450 in the dual purpose MW series (despite having bus seats so that logically, it ought to have been a 13xxl).

We also covered the 1954 and 1964 renumberings in an article in EBN 489, January 2005, with an update/ corrections in 491, March 2005. Copies of both are available in our digital archive, see feature box on the inside rear cover.

Displaying the numbers

The 1954 scheme saw the original style of large cast fleetnumber plates replaced by pressed alloy plates with a black background and a raised border. Plates fitted to coaches and open-toppers mostly had a cream background with green borders and numbers. Depot allocation codes were initially shown by a series of coloured symbols, but from 1958 the familiar two-letter codes were introduced, again on pressed alloy plates but without a raised border.

At Lincolnshire, Kydd had used similar alloy plates but with a dark red background and he adopted this style for the 1964 scheme, with plates about 7.5" x 2.75". The shade of red varied over time - I have quite a variety of different shades amongst my collection. Depot allocation plates were the same colour.



Ian Kydd and the Lincolnshire numbering system

After service in the RAF immediately after the war, Ian Kydd studied at university and then joined AEC as a graduate apprentice. In 1953 he moved to the operating side of the industry as deputy assistant engineer for Eastern Counties, then in 1956 he moved to United Auto as assistant chief engineer, progressing to chief engineer of Lincolnshire Road Car two years later from April 1958 at the relatively young age of 30.

Meanwhile, at Eastern National, Mr W T Skinner had been assistant chief engineer from 1946 and was promoted to chief engineer in 1949, replacing Mr W J Morison who retired after holding the post since 1929 and at its predecessors before that - indeed, Morison had started with Clarkson of steam bus fame back in 1903. So it was Skinner who implemented the 1954 renumbering, made necessary by the absorption of the Westcliff and Hicks' fleets. From January 1963 he became the general manager of Cumberland Motor Services and Ian Kydd duly filled the vacancy at EN. In a further example of the way senior management moves took place within the Tilling Group, Kydd's replacement as chief engineer at Lincolnshire was EN's assistant chief engineer, Charles Lennon!

Whilst at Lincolnshire, Ian Kydd had inherited a numbering system introduced there in September 1953. Previously vehicles had been numbered sequentially and had reached 998. The then chief engineer Mr R E Dunhill decided to renumber the fleet in batches by types, firstly by manufacturer and then by single or double deck. We don't have room for the full list here, but for example:

- 1500's - Leyland single-deckers
- 1600's - Leyland double-deckers
- 1700's - Guy Arab double-deckers
- 1800's - AEC Regal single-deckers
- 1900's - AEC Regent double-deckers
- 2000's - Bristol L-type single-deckers
- 2100's - Bristol K-type double-deckers.

The system then expanded as more vehicles were delivered and new types introduced, generally with the even hundreds being single deckers and the odd hundreds for double deckers. Obviously where there were more than one hundred buses of a type, this meant they were not sequentially numbered, thus for example, the Bristol LD/FS series 23xx had to be followed by 25xx, the 24xx numbers having been used for Bristol SC buses. He also introduced the pressed aluminium number plates, as described above.

Kydd presumably saw the shortcomings of this system and so after his move to EN, devised a more logical separation of coaches, single deck and double deck buses that allowed for the development of the fleet. The system was devised in the early part of 1964, by which time the Moores' business had been acquired and almost all the pre-war buses had been withdrawn, so that the fleet had reached a high degree of standardisation that facilitated the new numbering scheme.

Kydd remained at Eastern National until May 1970, being succeeded by his assistant, John Jepson.

Many thanks to Richard Belton of the Lincolnshire Vintage Vehicle Society for his help.
Biographical details are from contemporary issues of *Bus and Coach*.

Ipswich Corporation

In the Group's earlier years our coverage included Ipswich Corporation – probably on the basis that EN buses ran into that town on services 123 from Clacton and 207 from Colchester; today we only report on their operations in Essex. We were just too late to cover trolleybuses in our News Sheets, the last such route in Ipswich having been withdrawn a few months before N/S 1, in August 1963. (Southend withdrew theirs in 1954 and Colchester was never a trolleybus operator; Eastern National and Westcliff however nearly did run trolleybuses in Southend, as we'll explain in a future EBM Extra).

As is well known, Ipswich did not buy any motor buses until 1950 and in 1964, all such buses were still in stock. The fleet was 100% AEC, including two buses new during 1964, as reported on page 21. The highly standardised fleet at the year-end comprised 64 buses:

16	1-6, 13-18, 21-4	AEC Regent III / Park Royal
40	25-64	AEC Regent V / Park Royal (21-36), East Lancs (37-55), Neepsend (56-62) or Massey (63/4)
8	7-12, 19/20	AEC Regal IV / Park Royal

Thus all three municipalities we covered had Massey bodies and AEC Regents in their fleets, but that's about where the similarities ended. Ticketing systems varied – Ipswich using Ultimate machines, Colchester TIM and Southend – where the Coordination Agreement involved much longer routes with many different fares – Setright Speed.

The most unusual buses in the Ipswich fleet were the eight AEC Regal IVs, a heavyweight chassis best remembered as the basis of the London Transport RF class. The Park Royal bodies had dual doors and seated 42. Number 9, BPV 9, was an early addition to the ranks of preserved Ipswich buses and is seen here at an event in its home town on 12 May 1974, pretty much as withdrawn from the fleet the previous July. Today it is in the care of the Ipswich Transport Museum, in store, awaiting a re-restoration. Behind is the former Osbornes of Tollesbury LYR 997, ex LT RT2827, which had been in preservation just under two years at the time and thankfully survives almost 50 years later, still in the care of Keith and Marion Patten, at the Canvey Island Transport Museum. **Richard Delahoy**



NEW THROUGH EXPRESS COACH SERVICES

DARTFORD TUNNEL COACHWAYS



**EASTERN NATIONAL · EAST KENT
MAIDSTONE & DISTRICT · SOUTHDOWN**

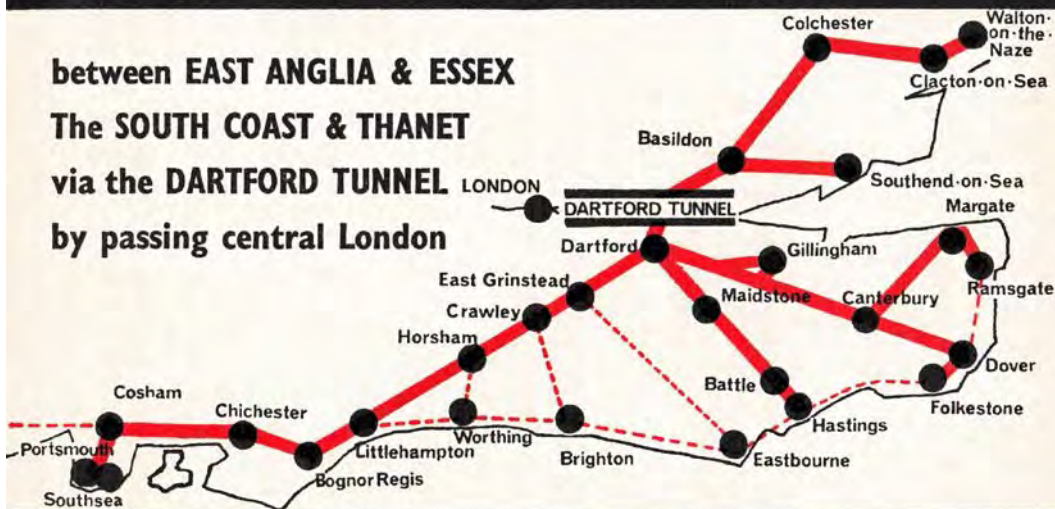
The opening of the Dartford to Purfleet tunnel on 18 November 1963 offered a great opportunity to fundamentally revise the summer express services and Eastern National worked with East Kent, Maidstone & District and Southdown to obtain licences for a new network from May 1964, marketed as **Dartford Tunnel Coachways**. Some of the services had previously operated via the Gravesend - Tilbury vehicle ferry.

The map below shows the initial routes, which comprised:

X20	Southend to Southsea	Eastern National & Southdown
X32	Clacton to Folkestone	Eastern National & East Kent
E33/X33	Walton to Hastings	Eastern National & Maidstone & District
X34	Clacton to Thanet	Eastern National & East Kent.

EN also ran their own services X21-4 through the Tunnel but they weren't part of the DTC pool.

**between EAST ANGLIA & ESSEX
The SOUTH COAST & THANET
via the DARTFORD TUNNEL
by passing central London**



Although outside the scope of our coverage then, the Dartford Tunnel (singular - the second tunnel was not opened until 1980 and the bridge in 1991) also saw express services of Grey-Green and London Transport buses. Grey-Green already offered facilities from East Anglia to the south coast by changing in London, and were successful in obtaining licences for three services via the Tunnel from the 1964 season, avoiding the change in London:

- | | |
|----|---|
| E1 | Great Yarmouth to Ramsgate & Folkestone |
| E2 | Great Yarmouth to Eastbourne & Brighton |
| E3 | Ipswich to Bognor Regis and Southsea |

All three picked up at points along the A12, including Colchester and Chelmsford.

From the opening day of November 18, 1963, new LT service 300 connected Grays and Dartford using RT double deckers, daily. Passenger numbers were very low - hardly surprising as there was no natural affinity between the two towns - but the service continued and was extended to Stifford Clays in November 1964, before being replaced by a less frequent 399 operated by one-man GS buses in June 1965. It was withdrawn completely in May 1967. Green Line 722 from Aldgate to Upminster was also extended to Dartford through the tunnel initially but that lasted just one year, being cut back to its original terminus north of the river in November 1964.

Not really part of the 1964 story, but we have a little space to continue the tale. After LT withdrew, Eastern National started their own service soon afterwards, initially extending three journeys on the half-hourly trunk Southend to Grays service 2 on to Dartford from July 1967. That wasn't efficient scheduling on a route entirely operated from the opposite end, so from October 1968 the tunnel journeys became a separate limited stop service, 402, Southend to Dartford, with three daily trips. From November 1980 the 402 was extended through south London to terminate at Victoria, close to the Coach Station, with four journeys daily. Later it was increased to two-hourly and later still, additional short workings from Basildon to Dartford gave an hourly headway over that section, but it didn't survive long after deregulation and ceased in June 1987. Essex County Council thought there was still justification for a service and after a gap of five months, Clintona Minicoaches started a replacement service 240 under contract to the Council with three journeys M-S, but this only lasted until April 1989. Dr Hefferon's quirky Thames Weald business had also entered the fray from August 1967 but that is definitely a story for another day.

Finally, any account of the new Dartford Tunnel wouldn't be complete without a mention of the much more quirky service run by London Transport for cyclists and pedestrians, using five Ford Thames Trader vehicles fitted with Strachans bodies (TT1-5, 526-30 FJ1). These full-fronted bodies had a staircase behind the cab, accessed from both sides of the bus, leading to a passenger compartment upstairs with 33 seats. Behind the stairs was racking for up to 23 bikes and a rear compartment for tandems and tricycles. Loading was from special platforms at either end of the tunnel. The anticipated traffic didn't materialise and all had been withdrawn by October 1965. One is now owned by Leon Daniels and is in the course of restoration. What a great sight it will make on the rally circuit one day! **Chris Stewart** photographed it at London Busworks on 16 October 2023, showing the work in progress on TT4, 529 FJ1.



Tillings Transport

The Tilling Group's London coach operations, Tillings Transport Ltd, had come under the management control of Eastern National in 1962 and this became more obvious from the following year when new coaches started to be registered in Chelmsford with Essex marks, rather than in London. Meanwhile, the fleet numbering system, based on registration numbers, had moved on from VYO 769 in 1959 to 1 BXB in 1961 (there were no new coaches in 1960); both were Bristol MWs but with differing body styles. The first Essex registered coach was NWC 14 (yet another MW). Coaches were kept at Northdown Street, Kings Cross in a depot that Tillings had acquired with the business of Pat Hearn & Partners in 1951; it was modernised as EN's Kings Cross Coach Station in 1963.

The initial livery was cream and black (as carried by preserved AEC Regal MXB 733 - see pictures in EBM 710, June 2023), but in 1961 this changed to pearl grey and endel red (maroon). Then under EN control, in 1965 it changed again to EN's standard cream and green, making transfers between the two fleets easier. From the outset of the Group, we covered Tillings' fleet changes in our News Sheets; 1964's deliveries are listed on page 21.



Above: Tillings operated tours and private hires from the London area, including inclusive holiday tours, in this case to the English Lakes and Scottish Highlands. The maroon livery is shown to great effect in this shot from **Geoff Lumb, courtesy of Travel Lens Photographic**. It looks like the driver is making an announcement to his largely elderly lady passengers, outside the railway station and Royal Highland Hotel in the centre of Inverness. One of five MWs delivered in 1961, 2 BXB was one of two (3 BXB was the other) that had the older style of ECW body; the other three (1/4/5 BXB) carried the prototype of the later style body with curved windscreens which looked much more modern, although the Tillings prototype bodies carried an oval front grille, as opposed to the more rectangular style adopted for series production.

2 BXB became T319 in the August renumbering; on transfer to EN in 1966 it was numbered 385. It was resealed to C39F in 1970, then in 1974 it was renumbered 1452 for contract use. It was scrapped in 1975.



Above: At EN's Central Works in Chelmsford, AOO 18B was the first Bristol RELH for the Tilling fleet and is believed to have been the last coach delivered in maroon before the livery changed to EN's cream and green. Although looking like it might have just been delivered, the red fleetnumber plate T400 confirms that the photo was taken no earlier than August; the coach had been new around the end of the year but not licenced until February 1964. One of the FLF coaches is just in sight behind it. It was renumbered T440 in 1966 (to avoid a clash with EN's 400, as explained on page 23) and was taken into EN stock in 1970 as 422. It was rebuilt with power doors and bus style destination gear in 1971, becoming 1613. Later still it received bus seats, before withdrawal in 1976. **Photobus.**

Below: Pictures of the Tilling depot at Kings Cross are fairly rare, but this **uncredited** shot shows Omega Place, the cobbled yard access from Caledonian Road. When rebuilt to become EN's Kings Cross Coach Station, a new vehicle access was created from Northdown Street on the other side of this site. Many of us will remember that entrance with its steep ramp down to the area that was accessible to double deckers. Pedestrian access was down a narrow alleyway off Pentonville Road. Bedford SB 8 BXB stands outside, whilst Bristol MW 2 BXB is washed in the garage.

**EBEG
collection**



The Independent Scene

EN's takeover of Moore's of Kelvedon in 1963 had increased its dominance of the local bus market across Essex, the Southend and Colchester municipalities excluded, but the independent operator scene remained interesting and varied.

Only three significant independent operators of bus services remained:

- the small but growing Heddingham & District, owned by former EN (and London Brick Company) man Donald MacGregor, formed after he bought out Aubrey Letch's small bus business in 1960;
- family run Osbornes of Tollesbury, busy building their massive new depot building during this year; and
- in the north-west of the county, Premier Travel, with a base in Essex (just!) at Chrishall and bus services reaching Halstead and Braintree (as Ian Pritchard recalled in EBM Extra 4, Autumn 2023).

Heddingham & District was still quite a modest operation with just ten vehicles at the start of the year (L22-6/8-32) and two more added during 1964 (L33/4 - see next page). There were only two double deckers, both early Leyland PD2s, and Bristol L types were the most common model, with half a dozen owned.

Osbornes were a much more substantial and long-lived business, its origins dating back almost to the turn of the century, with a fleet of 30 vehicles by January 1964, including eight double deckers, three of which were modern former AEC demonstrators (two Bridgemasters and a Renown). AECs featured heavily, including Reliance coaches, a Regent V bought new and ex London RTs; during the year more AECs arrived in the shape of the first four ex London RFs and another two followed in January 1965. The coach fleet also included lightweights in the shape of Bedford OBs and SBs but also Ford 570Es. Notable single deck withdrawals at the beginning of the year were a Daimler CVD6/Willowbrook bus and a Crossley SD42/Duple coach, both of which had been bought new. The fleet had reached 35 by December 1964 and as noted on page 21, a brand new AEC reliance coach, GVX 658B, was about to enter service.



Above: Brand new double deckers for independent operators were quite rare, but Osbornes bought this fine AEC Regent V, 2046 F, in 1957 for the service from its home town into Colchester, where it's seen in the bus station, along with an EN K type and an early MW saloon. Subsequently given fleet number 1, the lowbridge body was by Park Royal and it lasted until February 1973. **EBEG collection**

But a host of smaller operators also still ran into Colchester, making that town by far the most varied and interesting place to visit in Essex. David Harman and Alan Watkins wrote about their memories of spotting there in the mid-1950s (see EBNs 560/1, December 2010/January 2011) and there was still much of interest in 1964, with seven independent operators running stage services into the town, plus express services of another four operators:

Local bus service operators		Express services
Blackwells of Earls Colne	Hooks of Great Oakley	Empires Best
Chambers of Bures	Norfolks of Nayland	Grey Green Coaches
Colchester Corporation	Osbornes of Tollesbury	Premier Travel
Eastern Counties	Vines of Great Bromley*	Suttons Coaches
Eastern National	Went of Boxted	

* Vines took over the service of Best (Catt & Swinn) in April.

Our coverage of the small operators was admittedly very patchy but included some in metropolitan Essex, inside the London Transport area. Typically these fleets ran old buses on schools and contracts, as well as more modern coaches. So, through 1964 we mentioned the following in addition to Hedingham and Osbornes:

Audawn Coaches, Corringham - a pair of former Moores/EN Guy Arabs and a Commer coach;
Biss Brothers, Bishop's Stortford - the two new Bedford VAL coaches mentioned on page 23;
Broadway Coaches, Wickford - a former London Transport RT;
Catt & Swinn t/a Best, Great Bromley (to record their closure, their service being taken up by Vines).
Plus two London area operators, Elm Park Coaches of Romford and Super Coaches of Upminster.

Strangely, Premier Travel didn't feature at all, except to note that timetables for some of their express services were included in the EN timetable book for September 1964 - perhaps we had no correspondents in their area.

Below: Hedingham & District bought two vehicles in 1964, L33 (SXD 436), an AEC Reliance coach with centre-entrance Duple bodywork, and this bus, L34 (MRR 301), a heavyweight Leyland Royal Tiger with Leyland bus body, acquired from East Midland Motor Services. It was joined by sister L35 (MRR 304) in January 1965. **John Boylett** photographed it at the Sible Hedingham depot on 31 October 1965, on an ENEG coach tour. Photo courtesy of John Kaye.



Taking the Sea Air - Rear Cover Pictures

1964 was to be the penultimate season on Southend and Clacton seafronts for the Leyland PD1s that joined the EN fleet from the City Coach Company (via Westcliff) and Hicks and which were later converted to open top. In summer 1964, Clacton had five allocated (2101/5/10/2/3) and Southend had the other seven (2100/2-4/8/9/11).

These pictures of the Southend operation are undated but must have been taken in the final year of operation - routes 67 & 68 ran from Leigh, Thames Drive and in 1964 the 67 went through to Shoebury, East Beach whilst the 68 went to Southchurch, Hamstel Road. From the 1965 season, the eastern terminal points were swapped over, as seen in these photos. Despite the swap, the 67 continued to follow a slightly more inland route along the London Road and Chalkwell Avenue, whereas the 68 ran via Marine Parade, Leigh Broadway and Chalkwell Station.

Rear cover top: MNO 194 (2104, previously 1116) was a PD1 with Leyland bodywork. New to Hicks in 1947, it was absorbed into the EN fleet in 1955 and open-topped in 1961. It's seen at the Thames Drive terminus in Sutherland Boulevard.

Rear cover bottom: NVX 308 is at the opposite end of the route, standing at the top of Hamstel Road by Eastern Avenue, long before the roundabout was built here and Royal Artillery Way built as a direct link to Bournes Green. As the route to Hamstel Road was shorter than to East Beach, crews had a decent layover time here in order to maintain the even 15-minute headway along the seafront (1964 had been the last year of a 10-minute service). This bus was a 1949-built PD1A model with Beadle body, originally City LD11, then EN 1128 and finally 2108. It was converted to open top in 1958. Both display their August 1964 new fleetnumber plates.



This page: The PD1s were replaced by conversions of some WNO registered Bristol KSWs and these have featured in a number of recent issues of EBM, but we rarely see them in closed top form. Here then is WNO 477 (2377, ex-1420), one that didn't get decapitated but, ironically, was photographed at a stop used by the open top ones, in Sutherland Boulevard in Leigh.

All Derrick Rudland collection.

Clock watching

This was a time when bus companies were moving from the traditional 12-hour am/pm presentation in timetables to the "new" 24-hour clock system. EN rather fudged the issue during 1964. The Summer issue, like previous versions, had all tables in am (normal type) and **pm** (bold type) except for details of the continental coach-air and coach-sea services which were in the 24-hour notation - with such long journeys, the latter was less likely to lead to confusion, presumably. Then the September issue announced, on page 7, that "EN, in line with the principal Omnibus Companies of Britain, has decided to use, in due course, the twenty-four hour clock in all Time tables. This will make it impossible for you to mis-read timetable details by mistaking an a.m. arrival or departure for a p.m. one and life will be made simpler for everybody". [I'm sure many would dispute this!].

The whole page entry went on to explain more and gave some examples, with the clockface illustration that was to become very familiar. The fudge in this particular timetable was that express services, plus the continental services already mentioned, were in the 24-hour style but ordinary bus services remained in the old am/pm style. It would not be until 1965 that all the timetables were to appear in 24-hour notation.

From a 1964
Timetable:

See the Beauty of the Countryside



★ 200 OMNIBUS SERVICES MAINTAIN REGULAR TIME TABLES THROUGHOUT ESSEX AND ARE AT YOUR SERVICE CONSTANTLY.

★ A FULL AND VARIED PROGRAMME OF SPECIAL EXCURSIONS DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS WILL SHOW YOU THE BEAUTY SPOTS OF EAST ANGLIA AND SOUTHERN ENGLAND

★ FURTHER AFIELD, OUR COACH TOURING HOLIDAYS (3 to 12 Days) COVER THE BEST OF THE HOLIDAY AREAS IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, WALES and IRELAND

GET OUT AND ABOUT — BY BUS AND COACH !

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Essex Bus Archive

Have you enjoyed reading this? Well, you can find the complete 1964 news-sheets and every subsequent issue in our digital archive, which also includes the monthly EN allocation lists from 1964 to the turn of the new millennium, and lots more besides. Our long-term aim is to place the archive on-line in a specialist website, but until that's ready, copies of the entire archive - currently over 1,800 files - are available on a memory stick. All we ask is for £10 to cover the cost of the stick and postage. Please contact Richard Delahoy (details on page 1) if interested.

Postscript to That Was The Year That Was - 1964 at a Glance (page 3):

1964's popular music hits included The Rolling Stones - "It's All Over Now". But was it? October 2023: The Rolling Stones (average age 76) release their latest album, Hackney Diamonds. It quickly reaches number one in the charts. Meanwhile, a brand-new release by The Beatles, who disbanded in 1970, featuring vocals by John Lennon (who died in 1980) is number one on the singles chart. Old rockers never die!

Tailpiece: December 1964, News-sheet 12:

The management committee regret, that owing to already increased duplicating costs and the prospect of increased postal charges in the new year, the rate of annual subscription has had to be increased. The new rate will be 6/6d per year [32.5p].



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