

EDITORIAL

A Message From Eastern National

To mark the occasion of the issue of the Group's 200th news sheet we reproduce below a special message from the management of Eastern National from the General Manager but covering the work of all of their departments.

'I am very pleased to have this opportunity to contribute to the 200th edition of your monthly news sheet. To have reached such a milestone is, I feel, a great credit to all those who work and are associated with the Eastern National Enthusiasts Group.

It is particularly appropriate that you should be marking this achievement in the Golden Jubilee year of The Eastern National Omnibus Company Limited. Indeed, my colleagues and I were delighted with the Group's enthusiastic and important contribution in making the Golden Jubilee Open Day at Central Works such an outstanding success.

When I read through my copy of the news sheet it never ceases to impress me how meticulously and conscientiously all contributors must put together their material - and the variety and extent of information and news you manage to include.

The bus industry is in a time of great change brought about by the new Transport Act. Eastern National is determined to meet the challenge on all fronts. All of you through your news sheet here, your meetings, visits, tours and other activities help us to keep the communications channels open and present everyone with the message that Eastern National is the best in the business.

Once again, on behalf of everyone at Eastern National, I congratulate you on your achievements and offer our best wishes for the future success of the Group.'

Charles Mercer
General Manager

Commemorative Supplement to News Sheet No. 200

Enclosed with this news sheet is a fourteen page commemorative supplement which has been published to mark the occasion of the Group's 200th news sheet. The supplement contains a number of articles of general interest regarding the activities of both the Company and the Group which have been written by committee members. We hope that you enjoy reading them and find the supplement of interest.

Chelmsford Meeting, Tuesday, December 2nd

Members are reminded that a Photograph Sale will be held at 33, Goldlay Road, Chelmsford on Tuesday, December 2nd commencing at 1945 hrs. Full details regarding this meeting were published in last month's news sheet.

Southend Meeting - 1980 Christmas Film Show, Tuesday, December 16th

Following the success of last year's Christmas film show a similar event has been organised this year. The film show is to be held on Tuesday, December 16th commencing at 1930 hrs. prompt at Southend Central Library, Victoria Avenue, Southend. The following films will be shown :-

- 1) DO YOU REMEMBER - 1955 - A look at the many and varied types of lost property found on London Transport, with of course a glimpse of the types of vehicle LT operated in the 1950's.
- 2) ALONG THESE LINES - 1976 - A film telling the story of the 15" Ravenglass and Eskdale railway in Cumbria, showing some of the impressive scenery the line runs through.
- 3) THE NINE ROAD - 1975 - Traffic congestion is a major problem for London Transport. This film looks at a busy central London route and the modern methods used to regulate and control the service.
- 4) SNOWDRIFT AT BLEATH GILL - 1955 - A classic film showing a freight train stuck in some of England's wildest country.

5) OMNIBUS 150 - 1979 - Our finale is a new addition to the British Transport Films collection, tracing the history of buses from Shillibeer's pioneering work in 1829 to today, and looking at last year's celebrations in London of 150 years of buses.

All members and their guests are welcome to what should prove a very enjoyable evening.

Annual General Meeting

The Group's sixteenth Annual General Meeting will be held at Southend Central Library, Victoria Avenue, Southend on Saturday, January 17th, 1981 commencing at 1400 hrs. Full details of this meeting will be published in the December news sheet, in the meantime please make a note of the date.

New Publications

The following new publications are now available :-

E.P. 34 - Southend & District Joint Services - Allocation of Vehicles to Services including Depot Output Analysis - Price £0-15p (£0-18p for non-members).

E.P. 37 - National Omnibus & Transport Company Bus Services in Essex Area - August 1925 - Price £0-30p (£0-35p for non-members).

Copies of these publications are available from the Administrative Officer, 37. Warren Chase, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex. SS7 3DZ. Please remember to enclose the correct amount for postage and packing, which on orders up to £0-50p is £0-11p - see NS199 for full details of postage rates.

Also now available from the Administrative Officer is a new book written by Eric Axten titled 'A History of Public Transport in the Halstead Area'. This book records the development of both bus and railway services in the Halstead area and contains many interesting photographs, including a number of past and present Eastern National vehicles. Copies are available at £1-80p each, and this price includes postage and packing.

Essex County Council Publications

Two new Essex County Council timetable booklets have recently been published for the Chelmsford/Maldon area (dated September 1980) and for the Bishop's Stortford/Saffron Walden/Haverhill/Harlow area (dated October 1980). Both include details of all bus and express coach services together with local rail services. Copies of these timetables are available from the Administrative Officer (address above) at £0-20p each, plus £0-20p postage and packing for each timetable ordered.

Group Photographs

The Group now has a stock of photographs of Eastern Counties, United Counties, London Country and Lincolnshire vehicles. Any member interested in these particular companies should write to the Photographs Officer, P.J. Snell, 6. Mandeville Way, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex, and enclosing a Stamped Addressed Envelope, for further details of the photographs available. Also, if any member has specific photograph requirements of vehicles or vehicle classes within the Eastern National fleet and constituent companies (Westcliff-on-Sea, City Coach Co., Hicks etc.) then please write to the Photographs Officer who may be able to help. Peter Snell would also be interested to know whether any members have negatives/prints of the Southend Corporation Leyland PD3's hired to Colchester Corporation during 1972 and whether they could be loaned.

The 'Southend Busman'

Will members please note that there is not a November edition of the 'Southend Busman'. The next edition (No. 41) will be published in December and will be distributed with next month's news sheet.

EASTERN NATIONAL OMNIBUS CO. LTD.

New Vehicles

3077	STW 21W	Bristol VRTSL6G	3/2628	E.C.W.	LD39/31FD	24634	Delivered	24.10.80
3078	STW 22W	Bristol VRTSL6G	3/2629	E.C.W.	LD39/31FD	24635	Delivered	24.10.80
3079	STW 23W	Bristol VRTSL6G	3/2630	E.C.W.	LD39/31FD	24636	Delivered	24.10.80
3080	STW 24W	Bristol VRTSL6G	3/2679	E.C.W.	LD39/31FD	24637	Delivered	19.11.80
3081	STW 25W	Bristol VRTSL6G	3/2680	E.C.W.	LD39/31FD	24638	Delivered	21.11.80
3082	STW 26W	Bristol VRTSL6G	3/2681	E.C.W.	LD39/31FD	24639	Delivered	21.11.80

3083	STW 27W	Bristol VRTSL6G	3/2682	E.C.W.	LD39/31FD	24640	Delivered 21.11.80
3084	STW 28W	Bristol VRTSL6G	3/2683	E.C.W.	LD39/31FD	24641	See below
3085	STW 29W	Bristol VRTSL6G	3/2684	E.C.W.	LD39/31FD	24642	See below

3084/5 have not yet been delivered to Central Works; however, they have been completed by Eastern Coach Works and are scheduled for delivery on November 25th. These vehicles are the first batch of the 1980 order for Bristol VRTSL6G's, and are finished in standard fleet livery. They are to be followed by 3086-94 which will be registered STW 30W etc.

Withdrawn Vehicles

10.80	1347 (207 YVX)	1443 (NWC 17)	2801 (BVX677B)
	1423 (202 YVX)	2772 (VWC 52)	2807 (BVX683B)

It is understood that the above vehicles have been sold to Ensign Bus Co., Grays; they include the last Bristol MW's in the Company's fleet. It is interesting to note that 1423 had been delicensed for disposal for over two years (9.78), and had spent most of this period in the yard adjoining Pritttlewell Works.

11.80	2822 (JHK454C)	2835 (LWC661C)	2845 (MVX882C)
	2826 (JHK461C)		

The above vehicles have been sold to Southdown Motor Services Ltd., not for operational use, but for mechanical spares, such as the Gardner engines.

Allocations & Transfers

11.80 1202 BD-BS, 1217 BS-BD, 1500 BN-D/L (P), 1501 DT-D/L (P), 1502 SD (PLDS)-D/L (P), 1504 SD-D/L (P), 1510 BD-D/L (P)-BN, 1511 BD-D/L (P), 1518 HH-SD (PLDS), 1536 SE-BE, 1548 BN-SD, 1610 BE-D/L (P), 1722 MN-BD, 1731 BE-SE, 1937 D/L-LWA-SD, 1938 D/L-LWA-SD, 1939 D/L-LWA-SD, 2849 LWA-D/L (P), 2877 CF-D/L (P), 2891 SD-CF, 3031 CN-BE, 3044 SD-D/L, 3048 CR-CN, 3050 BE-CR, 3077 D/L, 3078 D/L, 3079 D/L, 3080 D/L, 3081 D/L, 3082 D/L, 3083 D/L.

The Company has introduced a new category of delicensed vehicles known as Delicensed Pool Vehicles, and which are shown in the above allocations as D/L (P). The delicensed for disposal (D/L (D)) category is still in use, but currently contains only five vehicles (9002/3/6-8) - see under Service Vehicles. The Delicensed Pool category contains both vehicles scheduled for withdrawal and also other delicensed vehicles which can be returned to service as required. All vehicles within the pool may be used for further service if necessary, and the current allocation of vehicles is as follows: 1500/1/2/4/11, 1608-10, 2300-3/82-4, 2804/9/12/4/6/9/27/8/31/4/41-3/9 2853/9/60/4/74/7/98 2928. The inclusion of some early Bristol REL6G's (15XX class) is noteworthy, although two of these vehicles have since been repainted for further service - see under Vehicle Repaints.

Vehicle Repaints

The Company has again kindly given the Group details of vehicles repainted during recent weeks and this continues from the information published in NS199 :-

October : w/e 18.10.80-3042 at CW.

w/e 25.10.80-1548 at PL, 1796 at PL.

November : w/e 1.11.80-3019 at CW.

w/e 8.11.80-1501 at CW, 1547 at PL, 1801 at PL, 1804 at PL.

w/e 15.11.80-1528 at CW, 1738 at PL, 1828 at PL.

w/e 22.11.80-1415 at CW, 1504 at CW, 1809 at CW, 1871 at PL.

Amongst the vehicles currently being repainted at Central Works is 2927, which is being repainted back into standard fleet livery from its Tesco overall advertising livery.

General

The Group's Tours Organiser, Martin Weyell, has recently returned from a holiday in California. Amongst the vehicles he saw there was ex-Eastern National Guy Arab IV, 2015 (20 PVX), now registered 1UI7018 and owned by a public house, 'The Butchers Arms', at Burbank, California. Our last recorded disposal for this vehicle was that it was exported to Los Angeles in 4.76. It is now painted red but still displayed its last E.N. paint date (IP OP 6/73 CN) in the cab.

Two Southend (SD) VRT's (3012/44) have recently been involved in accidents. Both are now being repaired (3012 at PL and 3044 at CW). 1203 from Harwich (DT) depot was also involved in an accident on the A604 road on November 3rd and is also under repair. Leyland National 1924 from Halstead (HD), which had been involved in an accident at Little Waltham, has now returned to service following repairs at Central Works.

Service Revisions

The extension of service 402 from Dartford to London (Victoria Green Line Coach Station) was postponed for three weeks from November 2nd, with the service now scheduled to commence on Sunday, November 23rd. Four return journeys will operate daily, replacing the existing timetable for this service, and leaflets describing the new service are available from Company offices.

Revisions to services recently applied for have been as follows :-

Stage Services

- 28 - Mondays to Fridays - to introduce one additional journey from South Benfleet (Rail Stn.) to Canvey (Leigh Beck).
- 33 - To introduce through fares with Eastern Counties service 112 (Saffron Walden to Cambridge).
- 36 - Saturdays - one minor timetable change.
- 47, 49/A, 59/A - Revised route in Harlow via Velizy Avenue, Eastgate and Terminus Street.
- 73 - Revised route in Tiptree.
- 74B - Revised route at Elmstead Market; revised terminal and farestage to be Holly Way.
- 88 - Mondays to Fridays - to introduce two additional journeys in Halstead.
- 152 - Mondays to Fridays - to introduce one additional journey from Basildon to Billericay, and one journey to start at Billericay and operate as service 154.
- 153 - Mondays to Fridays - one minor timetable change.
- 154 - Mondays to Fridays - one journey to be withdrawn from Billericay to Basildon.
- 231 - To revise timetable.
- 325 - Mondays to Fridays - two minor timetable changes, and one journey to operate via revised route in Braintree on Schooldays.
- 330 - Schooldays - two journeys to be withdrawn.
- 350 - Notice has been given that the Traffic Commissioners intend to vary the conditions regarding the use of Oliver Road, Shenfield under Section 6 (3) of the Transport Act, 1980.

Express Services

An application has been made to withdraw faretables and all conditions relating to fares for the Company's express services.

Other revisions to express services recently applied for are as follows :-

- 081-4/095/099 - To revise timetable, and introduce revised picking up points at Stratford Broadway and Victoria Embankment.

089 - As for the above services.

- 180/1/4 - To revise timetable, and revised terminals in London to be Victoria Coach Station or Brent Cross, Bus Station. Alternative route from Ongar to Brent Cross to be via North Weald, Epping, Waltham Abbey, Waltham Cross, Ponders End, Edmonton, Palmers Green and Turnpike Lane.

(The above services are operated jointly with Eastern Counties O.C. Ltd., Grey-Green Coaches Ltd. and Norfolk Motor Services Ltd.).

Unusual Workings

Following from the information published in NS199 recent observations of Chelmsford (CF) vehicles operating on temporary loan from other depots have been as follows :-

October 26th : 1509 at SD, 1515 at CR, 1710 at HH, 1752 at SE, 1805 at BD, 1815 at BD, 1827 at CN, 1850 at SD and 1855 at BN. 1811 was at Great Dunmow (outstation), 1730 and 3019 were at Central Works and 1801/4 were at PrITTLEWELL Works on this date.

2905, 3002/18 were also on British Rail replacement services.

November 16th : 1516 at CN, 1730 at SD, 1771 at BE, 1774 at SE, 1801 at HH, 1805 at BD, 1827 at CN, 1850 at SD, 3002 at BE and 3018 at WG. 1851 was at Great Dunmow (outstation), 1829 was at Central Works and 3033 was at PrITTLEWELL Works on this date. Vehicles on private-hire work were 1209, 1509/13/5.

It is interesting to note that 1850 has now been on loan at SD since early August.

Clacton (CN) vehicles which worked on temporary loan from Harwich (DT) during October were as follows :- 1.10-1911 replacing 1781, 3003 replacing 3000, which returned on 3.10; 4.10-1781 returned from CN and all DT vehicles were at their home depot until 7.10; 7.10-1521 towed to CN for repairs, and 1792 replacing 1783; 9.10-1508 replacing 1501 (now D/L); 10.10-1783 returned from CN; 13.10-1529 replacing 1532; 14.10-1523 replacing 1529 and 1519 replacing 1522; 15.10-1520 replacing 1519; 20.10-1522 returned

from CN; 21.10-1529 replacing 1520, 1858 replacing 1781; 22.10-1523 replacing 1508, 1780 replacing 1901; 23.10-1901 returned from CN; 25.10-1750 replacing 1780; 27.10-1520 replacing 1520, 1519 replacing 3000; 29.10-1781 returned from CN replacing 1750.

Other details of unusual workings which have been supplied by members during recent weeks are as follows :- 4.10-3048 transferred from HD to CR via service 88, being replaced at CR by 3050; 10.10-1208 DT replaced Lincolnshire 1410 (XVL861S) on a National Travel holiday to Holland returning on 12.10; 15.10-1701 CF on service 3A; 17.10-3073 SD working a WG duty on service 400 (0630 hrs. from Kings Cross); 18.10-1509 CF on service 21; 21.10-1610 BE noted on 1152 hrs. service 311 from Braintree to Halstead, and 1235 hrs. service 312 return journey, covering for the late running of the 1115 hrs. Chelmsford to Halstead service 311 journey worked by 3058 HD and which replaced 1610 at Braintree; 26.10-2922, 3014/45/60 (all HH) noted on a rail replacement service from Tilbury to Pitsea, and two BN VRT's noted on a similar service between Shenfield and Billericay; 27.10-1850 CF on service 25A, 3061 HH on service 24; 28.10-3072 SD on service 251; 29.10-3073 SD on service 11; 31.10-1710 CF on service 24, 3070 SD on service 2, 9020 BN noted at Leigh Church; 1.11-1209 CF noted on a private hire working at HH, 1710 CF on service 24; 3.11-1850 CF on service 25A; 4.11-1850 CF on service 2, 3018 CF on service 2; 5.11-1710 CF on service 23; 9.11-2833/54 3065/8 (all BN), 2900/9/24 (all HH) noted on a rail replacement service between Shenfield and Wickford, ex-E.N. 2821/37 noted at the premises of Ensign Bus Co., Grays with 2837 being prepared in a red livery; 13.11-1538 HH on service 400, 2908 WG on service 22; 14.11-2833 BN on service 44B, 3034 SD on service 251; 15.11-1212 MN noted on a private hire working at Chelmsford County High School for Girls, 1856/70 CF operating the Chelmsford Christmas Park and Ride service.

Service Vehicles

The recently acquired Bristol VRTLL6G's, 9016-21, have now all entered service as driver training vehicles, and their allocations are listed below. They have replaced Bristol FLF6G's 9002/3/7/8 and the semi-automatic Bristol FLF6LX 9006, all of which are now delicensed for disposal. On October 26th 9002/3/6/7 were noted in store at the Wash Lane Coach Park in Clacton, with their engines removed, whilst 9008 was at Clacton (CN) depot.

Allocations & Transfers

11.80 9002 BE-D/L (D), 9003 BD-D/L (D), 9006 SD-D/L (D), 9007 BD-D/L (D),
9008 CF-D/L (D), 9009 SD-BD, 9016 BD, 9017 CF, 9018 MN, 9019 MN, 9020 BN,
9021 BN.

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COLCHESTER TRANSPORT

Withdrawn Vehicles

There have been a number of developments in recent weeks regarding the early Leyland Atlanteans. In addition to 52, which has been stored at the depot for a number of months, 47, 51 and 53 were also noted in store at the depot during early November and are probably withdrawn. Additionally, 45 (WEV745F) has certainly been withdrawn as it was observed being towed away from the depot on November 3rd by a Leyland PD3, 129 DTD, ex-Lancaster City Transport and now believed to be owned by Lister, Bolton (dealer).

General

It has now been confirmed that Leyland Atlantean 46 (WEV746F) is to replace Leyland PD2A/30 96 (CWC 36B) as the driver training vehicle; however, 96 was still in service during early November, with 46 parked in the depot.

SOUTHEND TRANSPORT

General

The standing capacity of Leyland Leopards 205-8 has been confirmed as 17. They do have twin speed axles, controlled by a special key operated switch. Only drivers on the X1 and coach drivers are given a key, which can only be removed when the axle is in low (urban) ratio. Leyland Leopard 217 returned to service in early November following rebuilding with a semi-automatic gearbox and power steering, similar to 216.

News Sheet Contributions

Contributions to this news sheet were received from A.G. Osborne (C&F), M.L. Weyell (M10), P. Snell (M32), W.J. Morrison (M131), R. Delahoy (M180), P.W. Harvey (M219), B. Pope (M248), J.S. Wilby (M298), S.D. Barham (M313), W. White (M320), L. Thorington (M352) and G. Huggins (AM1). Notes for the December news sheet should be sent to the News Sheet Editor (address below) by December 10th.

Published by the Eastern National Enthusiasts Group
33. Goldlay Road, Chelmsford, Essex. CM2 0EL.

11/80
(GP) 230/NS200

EASTERN NATIONAL ENTHUSIASTS GROUP

COMMEMORATIVE SUPPLEMENT TO NEWS SHEET NUMBER 200

Editor : Alan Osborne (Chairman & Founder)
Production : Derek Stebbing (News Sheet Editor)

This Commemorative Supplement has been issued to mark the occasion of the publication of the Eastern National Enthusiasts Group's 200th news sheet. A number of specially commissioned articles, written by committee members, are included which cover the development of various aspects of Company and Group activities during the period 1964 - 1980. We hope that you will find the articles of interest.

HISTORY OF THE EASTERN NATIONAL ENTHUSIASTS GROUP

By Alan Osborne

The Eastern National Enthusiasts Group originated as a separate division of the M&D and East Kent Bus Club. Alan Osborne was appointed as Ilford Group Leader on 1 July 1961 and the first meeting was held on Saturday 16 September 1961. The first Ilford Group coach tour took place on Sunday 12 November 1961 in Eastern National 133 (FJN 212). The Ilford Group became the Eastern National Enthusiasts Group on 1 March 1962 with Alan Osborne as Organiser. Late in 1963 it was decided that the Eastern National Enthusiasts Group should become a separate Society. In a letter dated 21 November 1963, Mr. R.F. Bushrod, General Manager of Eastern National, expressed his approval for the formation of such a Society and the Chief Engineer and Traffic Manager offered their assistance.

The new Group came into being on 1 January 1964 with a committee of three (Alan Osborne, Laurie Murphy and Brian Barrett). The initial subscription rate was 6/- (30p) per annum, and by the end of the first year 66 members had been enrolled. Peter Snell was appointed as Southend Area Representative in April 1972 and two months later the 100th news sheet appeared. Alan Osborne resigned as Secretary at the 1979 A.G.M. and a new expanded committee of nine members elected to organise Group activities. Subscription rates for 1979 were £1.50 (second class postage) and £1.85 (first class postage), at the end of the year membership totalled 174. Bob Palmer is now responsible for all subscription and membership enquiries. Alan Osborne has assumed the role of Chairman and Founder, whilst financial matters are now handled by Paul Harvey.

There now follows a short history of the various Group activities throughout the period.

The monthly news sheet has been the backbone of the Society, it has appeared regularly throughout the period except on two occasions when a two month issue was published. In the early days production was by the Chane Duplicating Agency of Billericay and later through the use of duplicating facilities at The City University. The page size was altered from foolscap to metric A4 in January 1973 and following the acquisition of a duplicator the April 1973 edition (NS109) was the first to be produced entirely by the Group. From January 1974 the 'Southend Busman' published by Peter Snell has been circulated gratis with the main news sheet. Also in 1974 addresses were produced by addressograph. Disposals information, courtesy of The P.S.V. Circle, appeared from July 1977. After formation of the new committee, Derek Stebbing took over the post of editor commencing with issue 180. A new format has been introduced and coverage increased, 7 page issues appearing in April and September 1979.

Meetings started at an early stage but were generally confined to house meetings at Seven Kings. Attempts to start meetings in other areas were not successful.

An experimental meeting held in Southend in October 1965 was poorly attended. Outdoor meetings were later tried, the first being at Chelmsford Bus Station in June 1967. Following his appointment as Area Representative, Peter Snell organised local indoor and outdoor meetings in Southend. A successful house meeting later took place in Chelmsford, however, a Basildon area meeting in Wickford was poorly attended. On October 26 1977 the first of a new generation of Southend meetings was held at the Civic Centre, which was very successful and such meetings have now become a regular feature. After his appointment as Events Secretary, Richard Delahoy has assumed responsibility for meetings and has organised local indoor and outdoor meetings on a regular basis.

Coach Tours have always been a regular and popular Group activity, a review of these appears elsewhere in this news sheet, contributed by Martin Weyell.

Visits have also been arranged, the most popular being that to Central Works, Chelmsford, the first of which took place on 10 October 1964 and the most recent on 7 October 1978 with an afternoon visit to Sudbury being arranged on the same day. Other venues have included the London Borough of Waltham Forest and the Southend Transport Engineering Workshops.

The publications section is another long standing Group activity. In the early days only current fleet summaries were issued (1966) together with certain historical maps produced by hectograph. In 1968 the fleet lists were re-styled to the present one vehicle per line format; and in 1971 the maps were re-issued, produced by xerography. Since then the range of publications has been continually updated covering both new and historical subjects. The first pocket Fleet List Booklet, with printed cover and duplicated pages, appeared in March 1975, followed in the next year by an edition with printed pages. This popular publication now appears annually. The Group's most ambitious production, an illustrated A4 book concerning the Grays area transfers appeared in 1980. Publication sales are now the responsibility of Andy Meadows, with production by Bill Morrison.

The photograph section represents another popular Group service. It started modestly in September 1968 with a small range of older views supplied by Victor Jones. Further prints were then introduced at periodic intervals including a range produced from copy negatives of originals in the official Company collection. A new venture started in 1975 was a range of colour prints, produced from 35 mm. transparencies. Since then the range of photographs has been considerably extended, including a specialist Westcliff collection courtesy of Howard Cowell. Prints are now housed in albums for ready viewing at meetings and rallies. The photograph section is now maintained by Peter Snell.

The final area of Group activity concerns attendance at rallies and exhibitions, which provides both sales outlets and valuable publicity. Initially there were attendances at the Ilford & West Essex Model Railway Club exhibition (1969-1975) and later the L.O.T.S. Autumn Transport Sale at Caxton Hall in October 1974, preceded by the first South Essex Vintage Bus Rally at Southchurch Park on 23 June 1974. Each of the latter events proved very successful and have since been attended annually. The Group has also been represented at various other functions such as the Eastern National Driver of the Year event and the Stour Valley Railway Preservation Society (Southend Branch) exhibition. Richard Delahoy is now responsible for Group attendance at these functions and the range of activities is to be expanded.

This short history of the Group has only highlighted some of the events over the past years and many incidents have had to pass unrecorded, since space prevents their inclusion. In conclusion it only remains for me to thank all those persons who have assisted the Group during its existence.

GROUP TOURS THROUGH THE YEARS

By Martin Weyell

Today coach tours represent one of the most popular and profitable Group activities. However, it is not generally appreciated that these tours in fact pre-date the Group itself. The story goes back to the late 1950s when the Chairman & Founder, Alan Osborne, joined the M&D and East Kent Bus Club. It was that Club's policy to run three coach tours covering the two Companies' area each

year, so that members could visit every garage once per annum. Alan wondered if a tour visiting Eastern National garages would be feasible, informal soundings of fellow members and friends produced an encouraging response, a letter from Eastern National gave permission to visit the garages and a letter to Brentwood produced the quotation for the coach hire, and the first tour was under way. Bookings came in, the big day arrived - Sunday 12 November 1961. The coach used was 133 (FJN 212) an ex. Westcliff-on-Sea Leyland Royal Tiger with Burlingham bodywork. Six Eastern National garages and the premises of Colchester Corporation Transport were visited. The tour was an instant success and plans were soon in hand for the second. This took place on 4 March 1962 and visited Southend Corporation and the Eastern National garages in South Essex. It was again a roaring success; tours had become a permanent part of the Essex scene.

The third tour on 21 October 1962 instituted a practice which has become a popular part of Group tours, the hiring of an unusual vehicle for whole or part of a tour. The coach which started this was 015 (SEV 814) a Thurgood bodied Leyland Royal Tiger acquired from Rose Bros. of Chelmsford. The present author was one of the passengers on this tour, the first he attended. Amongst the long and varied list of vehicles used in this category are a Tillings Transport 'RFW' style A.E.C. Regal IV; ex. London Transport RF22 owned by Super Coaches, Upminster; ex. London Transport RFW1 of Elm Park Coaches; BRN 261, a former Ribble 'White Lady' of Biss Bros., Bishop's Stortford and 80 WMH an A.E.C. Bridgemaster demonstrator provided by Osbornes of Tollesbury. Company 'Specials' have included several former Moore Bros. Guy Arabs, their Yeates bodied Commer Avenger, 1500 (CVW854G) the first Bristol RELL bus, and 1000 (YAL 368) an ex. East Midland Leyland Tiger Cub which was posed at Eastwoodbury for a photograph (see colour print CPE 3).

1964 was a historic year in the Group's history, for on 1 January the Group became a separate society in its own right. The last tour operated under M&D and EK Bus Club auspices was the Mid Essex tour on 17 January 1964. The first tour run solely by the new Group was the Southend area tour of 10 May 1964. The Kent connection was still perpetuated in the picking up points. Until then tours had started in Ilford and proceeded via Tilbury Riverside Station to pick up Kent members who travelled across from Gravesend on the ferry. This lasted until the end of 1964 when the Tilbury pick up was abandoned and tours were extended into Central London.

From 1962 to 1966 tours operated within the Company area about three times annually so that participants were able to visit most garages once per annum. At this stage the E.N. fleet was extremely varied and hence there was sufficient interest to sustain this number of tours. A change toward the present day pattern was started in 1967. Increasing fleet standardisation caused the E.N. area tour to be operated once per year only, with a second tour to another area. The first such tour, in 1967, visited United Counties garages which formerly represented the E.N. Midland area. The out of area tours in 1968 and 1970 were both weekend events. In 1968 the West Country was visited including Yeovil, Exeter, Torquay and Plymouth using an E.N. touring coach whilst in 1970 a new venture was tried, a road/rail tour to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Participants paid their own fare to Newcastle, from whence two local tours had been arranged (using a Bristol RELH coach of United on the Saturday and the ex. London Transport Routemaster 254 CLT owned by Northern General on the Sunday). For both events the Group arranged the overnight accommodation for participants.

Levels of participation on tours had by now reached their peak, and by 1970 were beginning to decline. The reasons for this were probably two-fold: increasing fleet standardisation resulted in less interesting vehicles, there were also two other enthusiasts' organisations based in London which had the sole function of operating coach tours, in addition to all of the specialist enthusiasts Groups covering their own Company area. Garage tours were thus in a state of overkill. Fate then stepped in to play a hand, in September 1970 a tour which was to have been run in one of the last closed top Bristol KSW's had to be cancelled at the last moment due to industrial problems. This entailed the Group in considerable expenditure on telephone calls and postages to refund fares at a time when the finances were very low. The April 1971 tour was a non-starter due to the famous postal strike. A combination of the above together with Alan's increasing business commitments resulted in no tours being operated in the whole of 1972 and the first half of 1973.

After this two year gap it was decided to run an experimental tour to gauge the response. Alan was by now fully occupied in running the many other Group activities and so the responsibility for the organisation of tours passed to Martin Weyell. The date for Martin's first tour was fixed for 7 October 1973 and the Eastern National RELH coach visited five E.N. and two Premier Travel garages. It was an instant success and so once again coach tours were established as a regular Group feature. The future programme was agreed as one E.N. and one out of area tour per year. It was considered that this was the most the market could support.

The out of area tour in 1974 was another weekend tour, a road/rail event to South Wales. Arrangements were similar to the 1970 tour except that a very varied selection of operators was visited. Although the tour was very popular with the small band of participants it was an involved event to organise which resulted in only a very small profit. Weekend tours have accordingly been considered as less financially rewarding and no more have since been organised. Out of area day tours also enjoyed a revival and destinations have included Peterborough, Cambridge, Canterbury, the Medway Towns, Southampton, Winchester, Andover, Basingstoke, Swindon, Rugby and Leicester. Most have been extremely popular and have carried capacity loads. Most tours used E.N. vehicles, but with increasing E.E.C. legislation and in an effort to keep fares within reasonable levels other operators' vehicles have been used; for example, the 1979 was operated by an A.E.C. Reliance owned by Lewington, Abridge.

A new innovation introduced in 1978 was a Saturday trip to Sudbury which was run as much for the vehicle used as the destination, in this case transport was in preserved E.N. Bristol KSW VNO 859. A Sunday excursion in 1979 using the same bus visited Felixstowe to enable participants to ride upon the Eastern Counties open top Bristol LDL. The following year's excursion used a Southend Transport Leyland PD3 and visited Clacton where the open top service operated by the E.N. Bristol KSW's was the attraction. This then, is the present pattern of Group coach tours today, one E.N. tour per year, one out of area day tour and one excursion in an interesting vehicle.

What of the future? One cannot be over optimistic: tours have in the past been one of the Group's largest money spinners, enabling cross-subsidisation of other non-profitable activities. The rapid increase in fuel prices during the past two years has seen fares rise sharply and they seem set to continue to increase. Tours may therefore have to be operated in future on a break even basis leaving certain other Group services to finance themselves or cease. When bus service reductions are introduced, lightly loaded Sunday operations are amongst the first to suffer, Eastern National services are no exception and already Bishop's Stortford and Silver End garages are closed on Sundays. Should any further Sunday closures occur in this area then the Mid Essex tour would have to be altered to a Saturday.

This has been a short history of Group coach tours. When news sheet 300 appears in 1989 let us hope that coach tours, in whatever form they may be, still remain as a popular part of Group activities.

A REVIEW OF THE EASTERN NATIONAL FLEET : 1964-1980

By Bob Palmer

At the beginning of this review in January 1964 the Eastern National fleet was becoming more standardised on the products of Bristol Commercial Vehicles and Eastern Coach Works than it had ever been before. Only the Guy Arab double deckers acquired from Moore Bros. of Kelvedon in 1963 and the 21 Leyland PD1 and PD2's which remained from the erstwhile City Coach Co. and Hicks Bros. fleet spoilt this state of affairs in the bus fleet. However, since the Guy Arab's were powered by Gardner engines they were considered compatible with the rest of the fleet whilst 12 of the Leylands formed the summer open-top fleet. Three former Moore Bros. Commer Avengers were the only non-standard vehicles in the coach fleet, the saloon fleet was all Bristol/E.C.W. Three pre-war double deckers and two of wartime manufacture still remained. Nominally the oldest vehicle was 1108 (ENO 937) a 1937 Leyland TD4 with postwar E.C.W. body, Gardner engine and Bristol gearbox. 1274 (JVW 430), built in 1944, was an interesting vehicle since it carried the prototype

E.C.W. post-war style lowbridge body, with sunken offside upper deck gangway. These vehicles were withdrawn in 1964, 1108 going in May and 1274 in November. The very last pre-war vehicle went in February 1965 (2200, formerly 1257). It should be mentioned here that the withdrawal dates quoted in this review are the dates of sale by Eastern National which are published in our monthly news sheet. A vehicle withdrawn from service is still considered as part of fleet strength until it is sold.

A brief summary of the fleet as at 1 January 1964 is shown below :

440 Double Deckers made up of 72 Bristol K, 7 KS, 81 KSW, 137 LD, 1 LDL, 2 FS, 91 FLF (bus), 6 FLF (coach), 22 Guy Arab, 9 Leyland (closed top), 12 Leyland (open-top).

288 Single Deckers formed of 178 buses, 34 dual-purpose and 76 coaches. Vehicle types were : 18 Bristol L (17 bus, 1 coach), 19 LL (9 bus, 10 coach), 21 LWL (buses), 76 LS (46 bus, 2 DP, 28 coach), 22 SC (buses), 129 MW (63 bus, 32 DP, 34 coach), 3 Commer Avenger (coaches).

Total Fleet 728 vehicles

The years under review may conveniently be divided into three periods, namely 1964-68, 1969-72 and 1973-80. The big event of the first year of this review was the total re-numbering of the fleet into the present system on 9 August 1964, just nine years following the previous re-numbering from the 'National' system. The first period (1964-68) saw the delivery of only one type of double decker, the Bristol FLF and by 1968 Eastern National had amassed a total of 247 such vehicles, including 15 coach versions with large luggage compartments at the rear of the lower deck. The latter vehicles were used to develop service X10 (later 400) into the regular hourly service of today. The last 53 FLF's were 31' 1" long FLF6LX types with semi-automatic gearboxes for use on services 151/251/351. No saloons were added in period, although the coach fleet had a regular intake composed of new Bristol RELH or RESH types (some with Duple bodies), six Duple bodied Bedford SB13's (for express services through the new Dartford tunnel) and second-hand LS and MW coaches from the associated Tillings Transport fleet. Tilling vehicles were maintained at Central Works, Chelmsford and transfers of coaches to and from the Tilling fleet was a regular feature. During this period three Bristol MW and eight Bristol RELH dual-purpose vehicles were also taken into stock.

On the debit side, this first period witnessed the end of the small fleet of Bristol SC's, all being withdrawn by May 1964. Other vehicle types to be eliminated (with relevant dates) were Bristol L (1/65), LL (2/65), LWL (7/65) single deckers and Bristol K (11/67), KS (1/68) and Leyland (11/65) double deckers. 22 Bristol LS buses and about half the Bristol KSW fleet were also withdrawn together with the more elderly ex. Moore Bros. Guy Arabs. During the 1964-68 period the double decker was in the ascendancy, in spite of withdrawals, because Bristol FLF's replaced both single and double deckers. Eastern National took both Gardner and Bristol engined models until the BVW unit ceased to be available from 1967. E.N. also took delivery of the very last FLF to be built, this was 2614, a coach version which arrived in 1968, chassis number 236.337. In fact only five FLF's ever carried "G" suffix registrations, Eastern National had three 2931, 2613/4 (AVX973-5G) and the other two went to Midland General as their 312/3 (YNU350/1G), which later passed to Trent.

Not all the KSW's were doomed, since the newest ten were converted to 61 seat open-toppers for sea-front services at Southend and Clacton to start the 1966 season, replacing the Leylands. The full batch of ten, however, was not destined to remain together for long since service reductions and complete withdrawal at Clacton caused a number to be surplus to requirements, two passing to Eastern Counties. Eventually the total settled down to four operating at Southend (and then very often on hire to Southend Transport !).

Coach fleet withdrawals included the last ex. Moore's Commers (9/68), the last Bristol LL6G's with attractive full front 'Queen Mary' style E.C.W. bodies (early 1965) and the last LS's (9/69, the majority having gone in 1965 with the last nine lingering on).

If the years 1964-68 saw the rise in fortunes of the double decker, then 1969 onwards saw its stagnation and decline in common with other National Bus Company subsidiaries. The second part of this review, 1969-72, saw the demise of the covered-top KSW, thus removing exposed radiator vehicles from the normal fleet. The last KSW was withdrawn in 1/71. Four more Guy Arabs departed whilst the first of the 138 LD-type 'Lodekkas' was also withdrawn in the same year. Generally

Bristol engined machines were disposed of first, although some LD6B's were re-engined with Gardner units from KSW's and thus remained in the fleet for longer. New vehicle deliveries comprised Bristol RELL6G saloons with E.C.W. B53F bodywork of which 55 were received. Although these vehicles had a similar capacity to the KSW and LD double deckers they were suitable for O.M.O. operation, thus making a useful operating economy in the days of passenger decline, an unfortunate feature of bus operation since the early 1960's. The first examples of the new rear engined Bristol VRT double decker arrived in 1968/9 which included 3000 (CPU979G), the first production model. However, Eastern National were somewhat sceptical of this new design since no further deliveries came in 1970, only four in 1971 and just three in 1972.

The middle period of this review was made more interesting through the second-hand acquisitions. In 1969 an LS saloon came from United Automobile Services, to replace an E.N. accident victim. In 1970, the usual selection of coaches came from Tillings, but 1971 saw two interesting separate purchases. The first involved two Leyland Tiger Cubs with Metro-Cammell B41F bodywork which came from East Midland and were numbered 1000/1 entering service in the Southend area and lasting until 11/72. The second purchase was of a batch of 15 Bristol VRT's (built 1970) from W. Alexander & Sons (Midland) Ltd. of Falkirk, Scotland, which were exchanged for a batch of FLF6G's of 1966. This was a prelude to the later N.B.C./S.B.G. exchanges. The Scottish VRT's operated O.M.O. in their original blue livery on service 400 for about 10 months before gaining standard green livery. They replaced the coach seating FLF's which were transferred to Tillings for use on Coach/Air services between London and Stansted and Southend Airports. They later returned to E.N. in 1973 and were converted to service buses. These vehicles (now numbered 2932-46) may easily be identified by the raised polished body mouldings and half depth rear top deck windows.

This period also witnessed a number of changes in the links between E.N. and Tillings. The numerous vehicle exchanges continued, and in the summer of 1969 Tillings Transport was re-named Tillings Travel. In February 1970 all the remaining vehicles in the Tillings Travel fleet were transferred to Eastern National and Tillings Travel then became a travel agency only. Later on 1 January 1971 Tillings Travel became operational once again, but more closely under E.N. control, the Tillings vehicles being re-numbered by the addition of 9000 to their original E.N. fleet numbers, rather than in a separate "T" series, thus making vehicle transfers more simpler. The last Bedford SB's in the E.N. coach fleet were withdrawn in 10/70.

If the period 1969-72 was stagnant for the double decker, then the next (1973 to date) was to see its decline, and the main enemy was the all conquering Leyland National. No fewer than 225 of the Mark 1, Series A model were purchased and apart from internal finishes they are virtually identical, all having the characteristic roof pod and a single front entrance. Eastern National's faith in this vehicle has, on the whole, been well founded and the problems encountered by certain other operators do not seem to have arisen, a fitting tribute to the high standards of maintenance. Latest deliveries have been of the new Leyland National 2 model, the heavy duty version complete with roof pod being favoured. The Bristol LD was finally eliminated by 9/76 whilst the LS saloons bade their farewell in 3/76. The MW fleet is, at the time of writing, almost extinct with just a few examples remaining in the delicensed for disposal pool. The MW bus fleet had been made more interesting by the conversion of a number of former 300 series coaches into buses, complete with power operated doors and roof-line destination boxes. An initial batch of five was converted in 1969 with the main batch of 15 being completed in 1974/5. A sad loss in 11/75 was the last of the Moore Bros. Guy Arabs, twelve years after take over (the last two having been ordered by Moore's but delivered new to E.N.). However, their period of fleet occupancy did mean that 100% standardisation on Bristol chassis in the E.N. fleet never occurred. The one and only Bristol LD1X6G (2510, 236 LNO) went in 2/77, and large inroads were then made into the FLF fleet, the first normal withdrawals starting in 9/76 and now only about 89 remain in stock, of which only 53 remained in service at the time of writing. Six FLF's were transferred to Eastern Counties as part of the N.B.C./S.B.G. vehicle exchanges of 1973. In return E.N. received three VRT's from Western S.M.T. and three of the longer version VRTLL6G's from Eastern Scottish, although all were re-seated to 70 to maintain parity. Further new VRT's were also obtained during this period, the latest examples being in

a special green and white dual-purpose livery and lettered for specific use on the now popular 400 service. A few FLF's were converted to and operated as one man vehicles, although constant deliveries of new vehicles and the problems of fare collection, caused this mode of operation to cease in 10/76.

In 1973 the National Bus Company (Eastern National's parent) set up certain coaching fleets divorced from bus operating subsidiaries. Under this scheme the three separate coaching fleets in London, including Tillings Travel, were amalgamated to form National Travel (South East) Ltd. In May 1974 the whole of the E.N. coach fleet was transferred to the new Company, although vehicles still tended to be allocated to certain E.N. garages. National Travel later took over Kelvedon and Prittlewell garages (see elsewhere). However, the Anglian Division of this new concern was not successful and in 1978 it was broken up, the Essex area operations returned to E.N. whilst the London operations were re-cast as National Travel (London) based at the former Timpsons premises at Catford. Eastern National thus gained a coach fleet once again, which comprised 20 Plaxton and E.C.W. bodied Bristol RELH's numbered 1400-19. Also included were 18 Bedford YMT's with Duple bodies to bus grant specification that had been ordered by National Travel but which were delivered direct to E.N. These vehicles (1200-17) are in dual-purpose livery and are used on stage services when not required for coaching duties.

Other alterations to the single deck fleet may now be considered. In 1975/6 eight Bristol RELH dual-purpose vehicles were converted to buses, also in 1976 five Ford R1014 saloons with Duple bus bodywork arrived, these have always operated from BS. The year 1977 saw the arrival of four Bristol LH saloons with E.C.W. bodywork which have spent their life at CR (except for two temporary loans to SE).

The final interesting events to relate concern the open-top fleet, four FLF's have been converted to open-top for operation at Southend, to replace the remaining KSW's. The first conversion was 2937 (RWC 608), a former coach, which was re-numbered 2300 in 6/78. Three more conversions of bus FLF's followed in 4/79. However, this was not to be the end of the KSW's as in 1979 two were sent to Clacton to operate an open-top service in the town once again, and this was repeated in 1980.

Thus we arrive at 1980, and perhaps the most interesting development so far this year has been the acquisition of 6 Bristol VRTLL6Gs from Southdown (originally Eastern Scottish) for use as driver training vehicles. These vehicles will add further variety to the E.N. fleet. News of future vehicle orders seems to suggest that rather more Bristol VRT's will be received than Leyland Nationals, thus reversing the trend of the last twelve years and perhaps on that hopeful note it is an appropriate place to conclude this narrative.

A brief summary of the fleet as at 1 October 1980 is shown below :

<u>173 Double Deckers</u>	made up of 3 Bristol KSW (open-top), 4 FLF (open-top), 89 FLF's and 77 VRT's.
<u>344 Single Deckers</u>	made up of 306 buses, 18 dual-purpose and 20 coaches. Vehicle types are : 5 Ford (buses), 4 Bristol LH (buses), 18 Bedford YMT (dual-purpose), 4 Bristol MW (buses - all delicensed awaiting disposal) 23 Bristol RELH (20 coaches, 3 buses - delicensed awaiting disposal), 55 Bristol REEL (buses) and 235 Leyland Nationals (buses).
<u>Total Fleet 517 vehicles</u>	

A SURVEY OF EASTERN NATIONAL GARAGES 1964 - 1980

By Derek Stebbing

The sixteen years since the publication of the Group's first news sheet in January 1964 have seen a number of changes to the Company's garages and outstations, with many premises modernised to incorporate new maintenance facilities, some garages closed, and the reduction of the number of outstations to two (Great Dunmow and Walton-on-the-Naze). This article describes the main changes which have occurred during this period and provides a background to Group publication E.P.10 (Eastern National Garage and Outstation Directory) which is available from the Administrative Officer.

In January 1964, Eastern National vehicles operated from the following premises :

Brentwood - North Road (BD)

Braintree - Fairfield Road (BE)

Outstation: Silver End - Boars Tye Road (SE, code not carried)

Basildon - Cherrydown (BN)

Bishop's Stortford - South Street (BS)

Outstation: Harlow - High Street (HW, code not carried)

Chelmsford - Duke Street (CF)

Outstation: Great Dunmow - North Street (premises of Don's Coaches)
(DW, code not carried)

Clacton-on-Sea - Castle Road (CN)

- Wash Lane (CN - coaches only)

Outstations: Dovercourt - Kingsway (DT)

Walton-on-the-Naze - Kino Road (WN, code not carried)

Colchester - Queen Street (CR)

Outstations: Brightlingsea - Victoria Place

West Mersea - High Street (WM, code not carried)

Stoke-by-Nayland - rear of Angel P.H. (no garage premises)

Canvey - Leigh Beck (CY)

Halstead - High Street (HD)

Hadleigh - London Road (HH)

Kelvedon - High Street (KN)

Kings Cross - Pentonville Road, London, N.1 (premises owned by Tillings Transport
(B.T.C.) Ltd.) (KX, code not carried)

Maldon - High Street (MN)

Prittlewell - Fairfax Drive (PL - coach and contract allocation of SD)

Southend-on-Sea - London Road (SD)

- Pier Hill Coach Station (PH, code not carried)

- Tylers Avenue (TA, code not carried)

Wood Green - Lordship Lane, London, N.22 (WG)

The codes shown in parentheses were carried on the vehicles on a plate above the front-number plate. The un-carried outstation codes listed were used either as abbreviations at the main garages and/or in Company allocation lists.

The first major change came with the closure of the former City Coach Company garage at Tylers Avenue, Southend at the end of July 1964, and its subsequent demolition later that year. Following extensive service revisions on 11 April 1965 Stoke-by-Nayland outstation was closed, and on 12 December 1965 Silver End outstation closed operationally, and was subsequently used for the storage of delicensed vehicles. During the summer of 1965 a number of coaches was allocated to Central Works, Chelmsford for operation on extended holiday tours, and from May 1966 coaches operating from this base carried CP (Coach Pool) garage plates. In the autumn of 1966 Pier Hill Coach Station at Southend was closed and advertised for sale, being finally sold in 1974. The building is now in use as a carpet warehouse, largely unaltered. On 16 April 1967 a new garage and adjacent Bus Station was opened at Harwich, on the forecourt area of the Rail Station to replace the premises at Dovercourt which were later purchased by Essex County Council and converted into a very attractive public library. The garage code DT was retained for the new premises. On 1 July 1967 the outstation at Brightlingsea closed, with its operation on service 78 being transferred to Colchester.

In 1968 construction began on a new covered Bus Station within the main Southend garage at London Road, additional vehicle parking space was opened at the rear. The Bus Station opened late in 1968 and incorporated a new entrance from the Ring Road. Also in 1968 the former 'National' garage at Wash Lane, Clacton was closed and sold but the adjacent coach park remained.

In the summer of 1969 Tillings Transport was re-designated as Tillings Travel and on 1 February 1970 the Company became solely a travel agent within the N.B.C. based at Kings Cross. Consequently all driving and maintenance staff were transferred to Wood Green and the overhaul facilities at Kings Cross closed. Kings Cross then became an outstation of Wood Green, with two or three vehicles, until April 1971 when this use ceased. The Coach Station subsequently passed to National Travel (South East) and later to Britannia Airways in October 1976. On 1 January 1971 Tillings Travel (N.B.C.) Ltd. became an operational concern once again with 43 vehicles being acquired from Eastern National. The main base was established at Prittlewell garage (although the works area was retained by Eastern National), and vehicles also worked from certain E.N. premises, such as Halstead, Harlow and Wood Green. Coach services as well as Coach/Air facilities to Southend and Stansted Airports were Tillings' main areas of operation.

West Mersca outstation closed on 31 March 1973, with revised timetables being introduced on the 75/76 group of services the following day. Also on 1 April 1973 Tillings Travel (N.B.C.) became a separate administrative entity from Eastern National and was subsequently absorbed into National Travel (South East) Ltd., although vehicles continued to be allocated to Eastern National garages. Operations from Harlow outstation (acquired from Wright Bros., Harlow) ceased in February 1973 and the premises were later sold. Also in 1973 work began on the modernisation of Chelmsford garage, to incorporate new maintenance facilities and a covered Bus Station, the new facilities opened in April 1974. In October 1973 Tillings Travel moved their operating base to the Eastern National garage at Kelvedon and also used the premises at Silver End for vehicle storage. Prittlewell garage reverted to Eastern National ownership at the same time. Eastern National vehicles continued to operate from Kelvedon until October 1974. In March 1974 Harwich (DE) was officially designated as a garage, separate from Clacton (CN) for vehicle allocation purposes, although interworking of vehicles between the two garages remains a feature of operations today. Also in 1974, the London Road Bus Station in Southend was re-named Victoria Bus Station following the opening of the new Southend Central Bus Station. During the summer of 1974, the garage premises at Prittlewell were let to National Travel (South East) to enable an allocation of coaches to be stabled there. On 14 October 1974 Silver End (SE) garage re-opened for operational purposes, having been returned by National Travel. The garage building had been modernised, and the premises, situated close to the expanding town of Witham, were used to house the remaining Eastern National allocation at Kelvedon, which was closed for Eastern National operations after 12 October. Kelvedon continued to be used by National Travel (South East) until its final closure on 7 October 1978. The premises have recently been sold.

At Basildon a temporary storage compound in part of the car park at Southernhay was used from 1973 until mid-1975 whilst a section of the garage yard was taken over by contractors engaged in the construction of Basildon Rail Station. In May 1975 the coach park at Wash Lane, Clacton was transferred to National Travel (South East). The following year saw a new maintenance facility at Maldon completed, and in early 1977 a similar project was completed at Hadleigh. In mid-1977 the staff accommodation and maintenance area at Basildon was re-built to provide more modern facilities. On 29 April 1978 Canvey (CY) was closed with operations and vehicles being transferred to Hadleigh. The premises at Leigh Beck are still owned by Eastern National and are presently being used to house the vehicles owned by the Eastern National Preservation Group, the Castle Point Transport Museum Society has been established to secure the premises for conversion into a permanent bus museum.

During 1978, the location of the outstation at Great Dunmow was moved to the new premises opened by Dons Coaches at Parsonage Downs, the former site at North Street having been cleared and re-developed for housing. In mid-1978 a new maintenance area was commissioned at Braintree.

On 8 October 1978 the coach operations in Essex of National Travel (South East) were transferred back to Eastern National, and the main operating base for coaches established at Prittlewell with garage code PL re-introduced. The coach park at Wash Lane, Clacton reverted back to Eastern National.

The period under review has seen Eastern National consolidate operations with a smaller number of premises, and although the future remains uncertain, the Company should reap the benefits during the 1980's of its investments in improved

maintenance facilities at several garages.

Comparison of Vehicle Allocation Totals in
January 1964 and September 1980

Figures for 9/80 are given first with 1/64 in parentheses

<u>Garage</u>	<u>D/D</u>	<u>S/D and DP</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Basildon	5 (43)	66 (32)	0 (2)	71 (77)
Bishop's Stortford	4 (5)	9 (10)	0 (0)	13 (15)
Braintree	6 (26)	14 (11)	0 (0)	20 (37)
Brentwood	3 (34)	32 (17)	0 (4)	35 (55)
Canvey	- (8)	- (0)	- (0)	- (8)
Chelmsford	20 (65)	39 (22)	0 (5)	59 (92)
Clacton	5 (18)	29 (19)	3 (0)	37 (37)
Colchester	7 (24)	25 (18)	1 (1)	33 (43)
Dovercourt	- (2)	- (5)	- (0)	- (7)
Hadleigh	16 (42)	24 (1)	0 (0)	40 (43)
Halstead	3 (8)	6 (10)	1 (2)	10 (20)
Harlow	- (0)	- (2)	- (0)	- (2)
Harwich	2 (-)	11 (-)	0 (-)	13 (-)
Kelvedon	- (25)	- (10)	- (2)	- (37)
Maldon	6 (16)	14 (13)	3 (1)	23 (30)
Prittlewell	0 (a)	0 (a)	11 (a)	11 (a)
Silver End	3 (b)	9 (b)	1 (b)	13 (b)
Southend	43 (96)	22 (25)	0 (6)	65 (127)
Wood Green	9 (10)	0 (4)	0 (1)	9 (15)
D/L, D/L (D) and LWA	37 (16)	8 (12)	0 (43) (c)	45 (71)
Docking Spares and Accident Pool	4 (d)	16 (d)	0 (d)	20 (d)
	<u>173 (438)</u>	<u>324 (211)</u>	<u>20 (67)</u>	<u>517 (716)</u>

Notes a - 1964 allocation included in total for SD.
b - 1964 allocation included in total for BE.
c - Large total of coaches D/L for winter period.
d - 1964 allocation included in totals for CF and SD.

EASTERN NATIONAL SERVICES 1964 - 1980

By Paul Harvey and Alan Osborne

It would be an impossible task to recall in this short review all the service revisions introduced by Eastern National during the past seventeen years. Instead an attempt has been made to highlight certain of the most significant changes that have taken place. During the period the character of the County of Essex has changed, the New Towns of Basildon and Harlow have expanded and new estates built in older established centres such as Chelmsford, Colchester and Southend. Railway electrification has also led to the expansion of other locations such as Witham and South Woodham as well as the settlements in the south east Essex corridor. New roads have afforded faster and more direct links between towns. Eastern National bus services have continually been amended in response to these changes.

On certain occasions large numbers of alterations were brought in as a major re-organisation, as took place on 19 April 1964, 11 April 1965 and most recently on 7 September 1980 when the "Traffic Action Plan" was instituted in a bid to reduce operating costs.

In 1964 the Eastern National operating area included Haverhill, Ipswich and Stowmarket but in 1980 none of these locations are served; however, other destinations have been added such as Dartford, Little Easton and Thorley.

One particularly interesting aspect of service revisions concerns those operations which have passed to, or have been acquired from, other operators. In the era under review the first acquisition occurred in 11/64 when 309 was extended to Havers Lane Estate, Bishop's Stortford to become a cross-town local service, it

replaced part of London Transport 350/A, 386. The first service casualty was in 1/65 when services 94/5 were withdrawn and passed to Osborne, Tollesbury. In 5/68 two services were lost, X93 (Southend Airport - Rochford Station) passed to Telecars Ltd., whilst E.N. operation on 283 (Halstead - Stowmarket), which was jointly operated with Eastern Counties, ceased. In 12/69 F.C. Moore (Viceroy Coaches), Saffron Walden withdrew their Saffron Walden - Dunmow service at short notice and E.N. introduced replacement service 33A, which was withdrawn in 5/70 and replaced by an extension of 33 working Chelmsford - Saffron Walden. In 4/75 certain journeys on this service were diverted via Debden Green and Village to provide a shopping facility following the withdrawal of Dons Coaches, Dunmow service between Henham and Saffron Walden. In 3/74 service 79 (Colchester - Great Bromley) was introduced, jointly operated with Hedingham & District, to cover the route previously run by Vines Coaches of Great Bromley. On a negative note service 307 ceased in 1/75 and was replaced by a Premier Travel route, which left Arkesden and Wendens Ambo unserved by E.N. These villages returned to E.N. territory once again in 5/75 when 305/6 were revised. Also in 1975, June saw the withdrawal of 58C in favour of Lodge, High Easter whilst in July the withdrawal of 71 was replaced by Kelvedon Coaches. The most significant change took place on 1/9/79 when a third exchange of services in the Grays area occurred. (These are detailed more thoroughly in the new Group book "Transfer of E.N. Grays Area Services to L.T. 1933 - 1951" by Alan Osborne, available from the Administrative Officer). Service 269 (re-numbered from 40 in 3/78) passed to London Country as 369, and 155/6 were truncated at Stanford-le-Hope, thereby ending Eastern National operations in Tilbury. London Country 378 was extended in replacement via Orsett Heath (a new destination for L.C.) to Orsett. At Brentwood new service 239 replaced L.C. 339 south of Ongar.

Areas from which E.N. operation has been withdrawn with consequent reduction of territory can now be considered. As part of the major re-organisation of 4/65 E.N. operation on service 85 to Wiston ceased, and in 5/70 service 27 (North Benfleet - Wickford) was withdrawn, which was one of the two services acquired from Benfleet & District. Also in the same month the northern section of 86 beyond Sudbury disappeared. In 6/71 operation to Haverhill came to an end when 89/A were curtailed at Great Yeldham, and in 4/72 E.N. workings into Ipswich ceased when 207 reverted to E.C.O.C. operation only and 123 was withdrawn north of Manningtree. In 5/75 the most westerly point on the E.N. map, Langley Lower Green, was deleted with the withdrawal of 305/6. March 1976 saw the end of services to Pattiswick, a village previously served by Moore Bros. of Kelvedon and by E.N. after their take-over in 1963. Finally in 10/76 a large scale withdrawal of services in the north of the County took place when 85 and 86/A ceased. Norfolks of Nayland continued to work to Stoke-by-Nayland (former 85) whilst the Colchester - Sudbury road (86) was left to Chambers of Bures. The local Sudbury - Great Cornard service was retained as 328.

After reviewing those destinations which are no longer served by Eastern National attention can now be drawn to new points that have appeared on the route map. As part of the re-organisation of services in 4/65 new service 212 (Harwich - Ipswich), joint with Eastern Counties, was introduced. However, this venture did not prove popular since in 9/70 the Eastern Counties operation ended and the service worked Manningtree - Harwich only, in 6/71 it was re-numbered 104. In 7/67 certain journeys on 2 were extended beyond Grays via the Dartford Tunnel to Dartford as 402, the first stage carriage operation by Eastern National into Kent. In 12/73 another new destination was added, Navestockside, with journeys on 260. In 10/77 new service 308 was started running southwards from Bishop's Stortford to Thorley, a destination never reached by Eastern National and last served by 'National' in 1932 on behalf of London General. In 6/79 service 87 was extended to Manningtree to provide tourists with an opportunity to visit Constable Country. Finally in 9/79 as part of the Grays area transfers E.N. gained total control of the Brentwood - Ongar road following the take-over of L.C. 339, the section to Coptie Green was acquired some years earlier. There have, of course, been numerous extensions to new destinations on new estates particularly in the New Towns and these extensions represent another category of new territory.

Other new services and destinations have been introduced following the closure of branch railway lines. In 6/64 new limited stop services 74/A were introduced to replace the Wivenhoe - Brightlingsea line. In 9/64 rail replacement service 99 (Maldon - Witham) was introduced which later ceased in 1/70. In the summer of 1971

91 (Wickford - Burnham) appeared following the withdrawal of the Sunday service on the Southminster branch, however due to lack of patronage the service ended in 3/72. Latterly this branch line has witnessed a revival and the Sunday service has now been restored, albeit in the summer only. Lastly, on a slightly more cynical note, in the winter of 1965 the bus terminal at Halstead was re-named Old Rail Station, however the train service on the Colne Valley Line had ceased somewhat earlier, on 1 January 1962 to be exact !

Variations to services within the Company area are so numerous that they cannot all be recalled, instead only some of the more significant changes will be considered. As part of the re-organisation of 4/64 new services 151 and 153 were introduced. 151 ran from Wood Green to Southend and replaced 15/A, it afforded an alternative route to Southend than the ex. City Coach Co. service 251. In 9/71 151 was revised to operate between Wood Green and Canvey and the route was later curtailed at Romford. 153 (Tilbury Ferry - Wivenhoe) operated via Orsett Heath and Chadwell St. Mary. Orsett Heath was a new destination for E.N. whilst Chadwell St. Mary had not been served since the 1951 exchanges with London Transport. Also in 4/64 services 3/A/5/A were linked to form the longest service within the Southend Co-ordination Area, from Shoeburyness to Canvey. The linking of services was also instituted by E.N. during the 1960's as follows :

4/65 : 310, 70 and 51 became 70 (Bishop's Stortford - Harwich).
5/66 : 38 and 95-98 became 95-98 (Chelmsford - Bradwell etc.).

However, during the 1970's the long services were split up once again, viz :

4/72 : 70 (Bishop's Stortford - Colchester), 103 (Colchester - Harwich).
3/76 : 70 (Colchester - Braintree), 326/7 (Braintree - Bishop's Stortford).
11/76 : 38 (Chelmsford - Maldon), 95-98 (Maldon - Bradwell etc.).
6/74 : 53 (Chelmsford - Colchester), 74 (Colchester - Clacton).
9/76 : 19 (Southend - Colchester), 115 (Colchester - Clacton).
3/80 : 19 (Southend - Maldon), 91 (Maldon - Colchester).

The most recent service changes on 7 September 1980 have, however, seen a slight reversal of this trend with service 115 (Colchester - Clacton) being re-numbered 119 and revised to operate from Maldon to Clacton to replace certain service 91 journeys.

There have been many trivial timetable alterations, to cater for specific needs, but in some cases more significant changes were introduced such as those in the Maldon area in 7/77 when the schedules were revised due to their lesser dependence on the workings of Bradwell Power Station. Service reductions have also taken place, particularly on Sundays, and with the withdrawal of 58, 301 and 303 on this day Bishop's Stortford became the second E.N. garage (after Silver End) to be non-operational on the sabbath.

In 1974 only a limited open-top service was provided at Clacton on 112 which did not appear in 1975. In the summer of 1979 service 121 was converted to open-top with similar operation in 1980. From 7 September 1980 service 121 has been re-numbered 117.

Many services have been re-numbered over the years, and in some cases additional numbers have been introduced to signify route variations, notable examples have been 311 which became 310-3 in 1/66 and 335 which was re-defined as 335-8 in 1/68. London services to Wood Green were similarly numbered 151/251/351 to indicate their common section of route to Shenfield. A rather interesting re-numbering involved 26. This number was originally allocated to the former Canvey Motor Transport route (South Benfleet - Canvey), but through a series of modifications it eventually became Basildon - Romford in 6/76. The number had become totally divorced from the Southend area. In 2/80 the service was re-numbered 226 since 26 was required for a new local service in Rayleigh, and thus the number returned to its proper home again. Service 226 was short-lived however being withdrawn in the service changes of 7 September 1980 and replaced by the new Limited Stop service 401 from Pitsea to Romford. A new service 226 commenced the following day from Brentwood to Romford acting as a replacement for certain 265 journeys. At Basildon two new series of numbers have been created, those in the 140 series for works services and a new group of services numbered 500-7/10/1, first introduced in 5/78 with a new 'Faircard' scheme. These latter services operate into a number of new housing estates at Pitsea and Laindon evolved by the Basildon Development Corporation.

Another event, which has passed almost un-noticed, was the change of licences of certain long services to comply with E.E.C. regulations on drivers' hours which apply to licensed services of over 50 Km. length. Accordingly the licences for service 251, for example, were split at Brentwood into two shorter services, each of less than 50 Km. in length, operated as a through route.

Limited Stop services began operation in 1966 with the introduction of 11E, 31E and 53E in May, a fourth service, 19E, was added later. A revised pattern of services was introduced in the summer of 1967, the new services were 311 (Southend - Braintree), 411/419 (Southend - Walton) and 453 (Tilbury Ferry - Walton), which replaced 11E, 19E and 53E. The services worked on Sunday to Friday with 411 running on Saturday between Southend and Chelmsford only. Dual-purpose Bristol MW's fitted with special blue destination blinds and reversible clip-on blue boards bearing the legend 'Limited Stop' in white letters were used; 402 (Southend - Dartford) also started at the same time. In 5/68 31E reverted to 31 and new through limited stop journeys from Harlow to Southend started, numbered 446. Additional Saturday operation was introduced on 453 between Grays and Clacton. Rail replacement services 74/A were later re-numbered into the limited stop series as 478. Most limited stop operations ceased in 1970 except for a few journeys on 419, 453 and 478 which remained. The 453/478 lasted until 5/73 and the sole remaining journey on 419 was re-numbered 19 by 1974. In 4/71 express services X9/X10/X11 were re-designated as limited stop services becoming 403/400/401 respectively, hospital service X90 later became 404 in 5/72. Service 400 became very popular, but certain of the other services were less successful, 401 (Southend - Enfield) being withdrawn in 6/76 whilst 403 (Canvey - London) disappeared in summer 1973. The London terminal of 400 was cut back from Victoria to Kings Cross (National Coach Station) in 5/73 and became Pancras Road in 10/76 when the Coach Station. Two new limited stop services have recently commenced operation, 401 (Pitsea - Romford) mentioned above and which started on 8 September 1980, and 405 (Corringham - Romford) on Fridays only commencing on 12 September 1980 to provide a shoppers' service for Thurrock area residents.

Changes to Company premises also precipitate service changes. In 11/64 the Southend terminal of 151/251 became Seaway in place of Tylers Avenue (the old City terminus). In 5/74 the new Central Bus Station opened in Southend which replaced a number of former termini, including Seaway. In 10/74 when Silver End garage re-opened 337-9 (Witham local services) were extended to Silver End whilst 70A (used for garage journeys to and from Kelvedon) was withdrawn. Another new Bus Station to be served was that at Grays, opened in 1975. Services are also subject to modification following the introduction of new one-way traffic schemes, such as that inaugurated in Braintree in 10/73.

Since 1964 Eastern National timetables have appeared approximately half yearly, and later annually, until the last issue, to N.B.C. format, published on 27 May 1973. In 1974 three separate booklets were issued (for the North East, Central and South West areas) with Southend area services being covered by the Southend & District publication. The E.N. booklets last appeared in late 1977 when they were replaced by area timetables published by the Essex County Council, including an issue for the Southend district.

This review has discussed some of the service revisions that have occurred in the Eastern National area during the years 1964 - 1980. Many changes have taken place such that in certain areas the present pattern of service is completely different. However, certain services have been subjected to less change, the most notable being the erstwhile 11 (Chelmsford - Southend). This was started by 'National' in 1922 and apart from a diversion via East Hanningfield introduced in 1928 the service remains basically unchanged after fifty eight years.

A REVIEW OF THE MUNICIPAL SCENE

By Richard Delahoy

Since the Group's first news sheet was published in 1964, municipal bus operations have seen major changes, and in some ways the two operators that we watch over reflect these changes, and yet in other ways Southend and Colchester have altered little during the past seventeen years.

Local Government re-organisation has had little impact to the outsider, neither

fleet has been merged or sold nor has either operator suffered more than a minor change of name, Colchester Corporation Transport amended its middle name to 'Borough', whilst Southend Corporation Transport merely eliminated the middle name altogether. Both fleets still proudly display the good old-fashioned town crest on their buses, which are painted in liveries which have changed little over the years. After many experiments Colchester retained the traditional red and cream, albeit in reverse scheme, Southend has remained faithful to its blue and cream, except that coaches sport their two shades of blue. Both fleets have included vehicles in overall advertising liveries to brighten up their towns and raise extra revenue.

It is in their vehicles that both operators reflect the great changes seen in almost all municipal fleets. No bus in service with C.C.T. or with S.C.T. in January 1964 remains in passenger service with C.B.T. or S.T. today. Both operators have inevitably moved away from the traditional front engine/rear platform double decker to the modern style incorporating rear engine/front or dual entrance layout and equipped for one man operation. Colchester tried single deckers at the start of the 1970's, initially with secondhand A.E.C. Reliances, followed by new Bristol REEL's. Southend remained faithful to the double decker, to which Colchester returned in 1975. Southend opted for high capacity vehicles to reduce fleet size (despite increased operations) and fleet strength is now 80 against 85 in 1964. Colchester persevered with smaller capacity buses and in the process has, with a similarly increased scale of operation, expanded its fleet strength by 19 to a total of 61. Both fleets have inevitably become more standardised, Colchester with 15 Bristol REEL/E.C.W. and 36 Leyland AN68/E.C.W. and Southend with 60 Fleetline/N.C.M.E. and 14 Leyland Leopard (but with four different body styles). Both have also taken delivery of grant aided coaches to expand their spheres of operation. Southend has continued to operate its sea front service with three generations of open-top vehicles (Daimler CWA6, Leyland PD3/6, Daimler CRL6) and Colchester has recently entered the open-top scene recently through conversion of a Leyland Atlantean in 1979 for use on a new town circular tour.

During the last seventeen years both operators have acquired secondhand single deckers, none of which survive in the present fleets. Colchester began in 1970 with a Plaxton bodied A.E.C. Reliance saloon from Hedingham & District, the first ever second-hand vehicle. This was followed by eleven more Reliances, six from S.E.L.N.E.C. (originally Salford) and five from Leicester. Southend contented itself with five sturdy Leyland Royal Tiger Worldmasters with Weymann bodywork finished by their former owner, Glasgow Corporation.

Both towns have also been busy hiring buses to and from other operators and also between themselves. Both have turned to Eastern National for Bristol LS's, and Southend have also had open-top KSW's and FLP's to maintain sea front service 67. Great Yarmouth Corporation has the distinction of having loaned the same two vehicles to both operators (A.E.C. Swifts 74/8), along with other buses. Southend has pursued a much more active role in the hiring of buses though, with vehicles being dispatched to Cardiff, Croydon, Harlow and Darlington as well as temporary loans both in and out, as a glance through the news sheets will reveal.

At the Group's inception the fleets contained a selection of classic vehicles. Utility bodied double deckers were still being operated, along with such oddities as Southend 203 (JN 823), a much re-built A.E.C. Regal of 1930 used for driver training, and Colchester 55 (KPU 519), the only Crossley ever to carry a Massey body. Manufacturers no longer represented in the fleets include A.E.C., Crossley and Daimler chassis and Crossley, Park Royal and Roberts bodywork in Colchester, and A.E.C. and Albion chassis and Alexander, English Electric, Park Royal and Weymann bodies in Southend.

A notable event occurred on Boxing Day, 26 December 1971. On this day Eastern National withdrew all bus services and Southend Transport provided certain replacement services beyond the co-ordination area, the destinations served included Colchester. For the first time a municipal operated service linked the two towns. This link was also restored on Boxing Day in 1972-74 inclusive.

The past 200 news sheets have recorded a period of great change in vehicles superimposed over a stability of control and direction. What then of the next 17 years?

FLEET SUMMARY COMPARISON

Colchester - 1964 :	1-35, 46/7, 51-5.	(42)
- 1980 :	14-28, 45-51/3-90, 101/2.	(62)
Southend - 1964 :	200-3/5-7, 230-3/5/42/4-7/57-62/5-9/76-332.	(85)
- 1980 :	200-9/15-8, 221-30, 334/40/2/5-7, 348-97.	(80)