

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 690 October 2021



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



fb.me/essexbus

Same Livery, Same Location, Same Photographer, 51 Years Apart





Above

First Essex 32669 has received this overall advert for Colchester's new Halford's store. It is seen in Head Street, Colchester on 7 October 2021. More information and photos on page 11.

Gareth Jones

Front Cover

The first 71 registration bus illustrated in EBM. March's front cover (EBN 683) featured a nearside shot of one Ensignbus's new Wrightbus low-height StreetDecks, 166 (LX21 CHO). In contrast, here is an offside shot of brand new full-height StreetDeck 177 (LX71 AOM), having just been delivered to Ensignbus at Purfleet on 15 September 2021. This is one of fourteen such new vehicles, details on page 21.

John G Lidstone

Left: Same Livery, Same Location, Same Photographer, 51 Years Apart

John G Lidstone writes: "I've been trying for months to get a close comparison photo of 2016 ADL Enviro 400 MMC 6499 (SN66 WHS) at the stop east of Thames Drive on London Road in Leigh to the photo I took of 1965 Leyland Titan PD3/6 / Massey 344 (CIN 444C), back in September 1970. This photo of 344 appears on posters (which I wholly composed) inside 6499 to simply explain to passengers why 6499 is in a different livery to normal. It has taken a long time as every time I've gone up to try and get it it's sailed past the stop. Then on the morning of 3 September 2021, whilst going to get photographs of the withdrawn Chelmsford Dart 42895 reinstated at Hadleigh (see page 9), 6499 finally stopped there. I had to run like blazes to get it, so I was pleased the comparison was so close, working from memory." This livery is also featured in 'From the Colour Archives' on pages 6 & 7.

Group Information

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer & Membership
Distribution, Publication & Sales Officer
Publications Co-ordinator
Tours Organiser

Ian Ransom
Alan Osborne
Richard Delahoy
Owen Woodliffe
Paul Harvey
Wayne Bell

Missing or Defective EBMs

Please contact Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road, Chingford
E4 8PT

pat_woodliffe@hotmail.com

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

Editorial Team

Editor & First Essex and Central Connect

Adam Kelleher
74 Park Road
Brentwood, Essex
CM14 4TU
adamxxx4@yahoo.co.uk

Arriva Southend & Colchester

Richard Delahoy, address opposite
(Arriva Harlow notes still to Peter Mansbridge
petemans_1@hotmail.com)

Ensignbus and Hedingham & Chambers

Mark Lloyd
448 Ipswich Road
Colchester, Essex CO4 0EY
lloydhousehold448@gmail.com

Panther Travel, Lodges and Publicity

Ian Ransom, ianransom2008@googlemail.com

Stephensons & NIBS

Richard Delahoy, address opposite

Smaller Operators

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

Service Changes

Paul Harvey
3 Orangewood Close
Gonerby Hill Foot
Grantham NG31 8QW
pw.harvey@ntlworld.com

Ipswich Buses in Essex

Robert Appleton, rcappleton29@gmail.com

Vectare

Chris Stewart, shenfield252@gmail.com

Subscriptions

A calendar year subscription is £25. New members may join from any month, but subscriptions will always run to December from whichever month the member chooses. Those joining from February to December inclusive will pay a pro-rata subscription calculated at £2.20 per month. For example, a member joining in March would pay 10 x £2.20, i.e., £22. Please contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road, Southend-on-Sea SS1 3TT
richard.delahoy@blueyonder.co.uk

Membership Records & Data Protection

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

Reports, Articles & Photographs

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

Printed by

Directcds Ltd, Unit 2, Gentlemans Field, Westmill Road, Ware,
Hertfordshire SG12 0EF, 01920 465023
www.directcds.co.uk

Target Dates for EBM 691

Reports to Sub-Editors	30 October
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	15 November
Dispatch by Printers	on or before 15 November

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 6th and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the next month.

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

© Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group 2021

www.essexbus.org.uk

fb.me/essexbus

Group Notices

Membership News

Welcome to New Member

Michael Whitehead, Colchester - 991 (re-joined)

We are sorry to have to report the death of member David Payne, Kettering (616) and also former member Paul Ashman, who passed away in July. We extend our condolences to their families and friends.

Paul was well known for some years as the then owner of preserved ex-Crosville Bristol RE, UFM 53F, and as a driver at Ensignbus and First Essex at Chelmsford, and was often seen at running days and rallies. The photo shows Paul at the wheel of ex-Royal Blue Bristol LS coach VDV 749, at the time part of Ensignbus's heritage fleet, leaving Southend on the 2012 New Year's Day Running Day organised by Stephensons of Essex. **Richard Delahoy.**

It was very ironic, and purely by chance, that the front cover of July's magazine featured the bus Paul used to own, UFM 53F.



Membership Renewals

We are inviting all members to renew your membership for 2022. A renewal form is included loose with this issue and all those for whom we hold an e-mail address will get a direct reminder soon after this issue is published. Following the introduction of full colour throughout, the subscription for 2022 will be £25 and we trust that you feel that this offers excellent value for the monthly issues of our 36-page magazine. We will continue to offer a mix of current news, historical features and great photos.

Payment can be made by BACS direct to our bank account or by cheque, as explained on the renewal slip. Unfortunately the option to use PayPal is no longer available and all members who used that method have been contacted separately.

I look forward to receiving your renewals! It would help greatly if you can do so by early December at the latest.

Richard Delahoy, Membership Secretary

Group Notices (continued)

The Running Card by Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Sunday 17 October: Cambridgeshire Road Run, Wisbech-Cambridge-March. Eastern Counties Bus Preservation Group.

Sunday 24 October: Transportfest, London Bus Museum, Brooklands.

Saturday 30 October: Plumstead Garage 40th Anniversary Open Day.

Friday / Saturday 5/6 November: Aldenham Spectacular. Alum Hall, Elstree.

Saturday 20 November: Enfield Transport Bazaar, St Pauls Centre, 102 Church Street, Enfield EN2 6AR.

Saturday 26 November: London Transport Museum. Acton Depot Discovery Tours.

Saturday 4 December: Ensignbus Heritage Running Day.

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



Book Review

by Owen Woodliffe

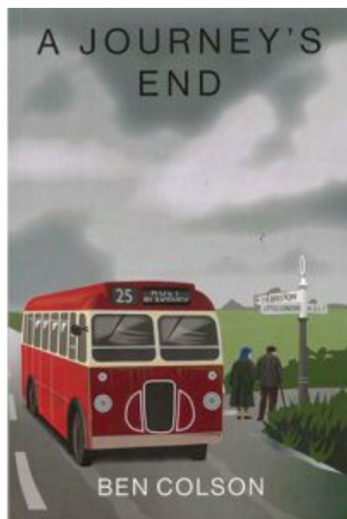
A Journey's End

by Ben Colson, self-published, softback, 335 pages. £25.
bencolson1@aol.com

Some members may recall that Ben gave a talk several years ago at one of our Chelmsford meetings about his experiences setting up and operating Norfolk Green. He had started his career with Eastern Counties in 1970 at a time when the Company, along with many other operators, were in crisis. Ben details the social and economic changes of the previous half-century in East Anglia and the response (or rather, lack of) taken by Government, Local Authorities and the Company. He has made some caustic comments about this trio but has backed these with comprehensive easily understood tables of statistics to prove his points and concludes that provision of school transport and rail closure replacement services caused inefficient and uneconomic operation.

This is a fascinating book, different to the usual offering, and a must for anyone interested in the history and operation of public transport (including railways) in East Anglia. For those of us of a certain age there are many reminders of events, both local and national, that are thought provoking. Of local interest is a section about the takeover of Beeston's that also involved ENOC.

Highly recommended. I purchased my copy from MDS Book Sales.



690 for EBM 690

Right: Eastern National Bristol KSW / ECW 2336, TNO **690**, at Central Works, New Writtle Street, Chelmsford, with blinds and depot code removed, so probably after withdrawal, with a Bristol LD alongside. It had been delicensed in August 1968 and withdrawn the following month, so the photo is likely taken around that time. Prior to this, it had been allocated to Braintree continuously since at least January 1964. It has an 'Easterns Pollards of Chelmsford B.M.C & Jaguar Service' advert on the rear.

Ian Pritchard

Below: Windmill Coaches, Colchester, **B690** BPU outside Colchester Castle Park on 16 April 1998. This had been new to Eastern National in February

1985, fleet number 4502, for route 400, Southend to London King's Cross, before moving to Thamesway with the split of the company in July 1990 (with the same fleet number). It was withdrawn in February 1991 and moved to South Wales Transport, along with 4508, B696 BPU. Both returned to Essex in February 1998 when they were acquired by Windmill Coaches, which had recently split from Crusader Coaches and was run by an ex-Crusader manager. They retained their SWT names of 'Dylan Thomas', as seen here, and 'Sir Harry Secombe'. In December 1999 both moved on to Brandon, Blackmore End. The sign in the window reads "Colchester Shopping. East of England Tourist Board", so the vehicle may be being used for tourists who had arrived at Harwich on a sailing from Hook of Holland (The Netherlands), although this isn't confirmed. **Robert Appleton**. A photo of sister 4505 (B693 BPU) is on page 28.





Southend Nostalgia

Here's a brilliantly atmospheric shot of Southend 267 (HGF 923) with lots to capture our interest. First, the bus: 267 was one of 13 London Transport Daimler CWA6s that Southend bought in 1953 for trolleybus replacement. This one had been LT's D246 and ran from Sutton garage for all of its LT career. The original bodies - Park Royal in this case - were removed and the chassis sent to Southend's then preferred supplier, Massey, for new lowbridge bodies to be fitted. The chassis were 7' 6" wide as befits vehicles new in 1946 but the replacement bodies were built to 7' 9" to provide a tad more gangway space. All 13 came via the well-known dealer W North Ltd of Leeds. In 267's case, the vehicle record card in our archive shows that it was sent to Massey on 1 December 1953 and returned in March 1954, entering service in Southend on 8 April 1954. It was taken out of service in Spring 1965 and sold to a local dealer, Franklin, in October 1965, presumably scrapped soon afterwards.

The bus is pulling away from Victoria Circus as it heads up London Road with what looks to be a capacity '3-bell' load - see how the rear of the bus is well down on the springs, the tyres almost rubbing on the wheel arch. Lowbridge buses - with their sunken offside gangway upstairs - had a weight distribution problem when full, with more passengers on the nearside than the offside. Was that compensated for by stronger springs on the nearside, I wonder?

The bus displays what might seem an unhelpful destination display of "Western Circular" but the passing point blind indicates the key information - via North Avenue, Victoria Circus and London Road - to Chalkwell Schools where it will turn right into Nelson Road to become an Eastern Circular via Fairfax Drive back to Victoria Circus and then on via Southchurch Road to Hamstel Road, ready to do it all again. Got that? Think figure of 8.

In trolleybus days the routes had used numbers 28A/B & 63A/B but from June 1956 these had been simplified to just 28 and 29. The passing point blind shows signs of frequent use with the right-hand edge folded over and the blind twisted. These blinds were about 45' long, with 164 individual lines, so it's not surprising they twisted on the rollers. This was the first style of passing point blind (list P1) used by SCT from the start of the 1955 Co-ordination scheme with Eastern National and had just a single place name on each line; the next series, introduced in 1964, had two names per line in many cases.

What of the scene? Behind 267 is another Massey bodied Southend bus, one of the 311-6 batch of Leyland PD3/6s new in 1958 and known to staff as 'long Leylands', then normally used on the busy 1 and 7 routes to Rayleigh; they were SCT's first 30' long buses.

On the extreme left can be seen the front wall of Southend Technical College with its prominent brick gate posts. Opened in 1902, the college was a prominent landmark and housed Southend High School for Boys from 1913 to 1938 before reverting to the more familiar Tech College name; the Odeon cinema stands on the site today. Between that and the bus, in the background we can see part of the Victoria Arcade at the very top of Victoria Avenue; in pre-war days, Westcliff Motor Services had offices here on the first floor but today it is Taylors Furnishing Store. Immediately above the roof of the long Leyland is the tower of Garons restaurant on the corner of Southchurch Road. On the extreme right is part of one of the massive and highly informative bus stop signs - but no bus shelter here. Mind you, buses ran so frequently that perhaps shelters were not needed, although other stops around Vic Circus did have them. With the possible exception of a couple of buildings on the south side of Southchurch Road in the far distance on the right, none of the buildings seen here survive today.

The photo is from a slide I recently acquired on eBay and the original photographer's name is not recorded but we must be grateful to him (for I'm sure it was a him) for capturing such a cracking shot. We believe the date is 1963.

Fast forward to the 21st century and sister bus 263 is preserved by Ensignbus and occasionally appears on their heritage running days. These shots of mine are from its return to service in December 2015 (interior) and 12 months later (exterior). The exterior shot, taken at Brentwood Station, recalls the atmosphere of the tungsten lighting on a cold winter's evening and the bottom photo illustrates the concept of the sunken offside gangway upstairs, a feature now long gone and unknown to younger enthusiasts, rallies and running days aside.



25 July 2021

Essex CC Community Link (Ugobus) services SB21 (Fuller Street to Braintree St Michaels) & 381 (Coopersale to Harlow) withdrawn. See EBM 688 page 7 for replacement operator details.

22 August

Ensignbus have made very minor isolated timing changes to services 22, 44, 66, 73/73A, 77/77A, 83, Z1, Z2 & Z4.

27 August

A21 Stansted Airport to London Victoria (D) **Airport Bus Express** service reinstated operating to/from Stratford operating in partnership with **Megabus**.

31 August

39 Witham Circular Town Service (M-S) **Stephensons** revised timetable.

1 September

LM0005-B/LM0005-H Pleshey / Good Easter to Chelmer Valley High School (Sch) **Lodges** school services withdrawn.

5 September

68 Southend Pier to Leigh Station (D) **Ensignbus** the daily timetable continued until 12 September then 18 & 19 September only. Withdrawn for the winter after 19 September.

6 September

32 Purfleet to Aveley (Sch) **Ensignbus** timetable revision to school service.

Go Ahead Hedingham introduced emergency timetables on Clacton town services 4, 5, 6 & 136/137 and also on 97/99 (Clacton to Walton) & X76 (Jaywick/Clacton to Colchester). Some journeys on service 3 (Clacton to Harwich) operated by **Panther Travel**. These changes are due to shortage of drivers.

11 September

700/701 Chelmsford Sandon P&R to Chelmer Valley P&R (M-S) **First Essex** new timetable introduced following removal of some temporary measures around Chelmsford City Centre. See also 27 September entry below plus First Essex report.

20 September

TCT1 Clacton / Colchester DAR (M-F) **Tendring Community Transport** area of operation extended.

26 September

62/B Colchester North Station to Brightlingsea (D) **First Essex** revised timetable with additional 62B journeys introduced between Colchester & University of Essex Mon to Sats.

66 West Bergholt to Rowhedge (D) **First Essex** revised Saturday timetable.

88/A/B Colchester to Halstead (D) **First Essex** timetable changes to the Saturday timetable with the 0630 from Colchester to depart at 0650. The 0718 88B from Halstead will operate as 88 departing Halstead at 0738.

27 September

100 Colchester Park & Ride (M-S) **Arriva Kent Thameside** revised timetable introduced operating every 15 mins.

700/701 Chelmsford Sandon P&R to Chelmer Valley P&R (M-S) **First Essex** temporary reduced timetable introduced until 30 October.

1 October

808 Brentwood to Shenfield Community Hospital Circular (M-F) **Brentwood Community Transport** timetable changes.

4 October

40 Witham Town Service (MWS) **Go Ahead Hedingham** new contract service replacing **Ugobus**.

C392 Harlow to Hoddesdon (M-F) **Epping Forest Community Transport** changes to timetable and route in Nazeing Village. On Wednesdays to operate via Hymead House and on Fridays to operate via Old Nazeing Road.

From an unknown date during the summer **National Express** introduced daily services 250 (Ipswich to Heathrow Airport via Colchester & Stansted Airport - 3 journeys each way) & service 251 (London Victoria to Ipswich via Heathrow Airport, Stansted Airport & Colchester - 1 journey each way).

Services by all companies have been hit by a triple-whammy of driver shortages, 'Insulate Britain' road closure protests (especially in the Thurrock area near the M25) and, from 24 September, car and van drivers queuing for petrol blocking roads. These have led to diversions, delays and cancellations. Some specific problems are mentioned in the following company reports.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 6 2021/22 (22 August - 25 September)

32531 BN (oos)-BN, 33095 HH-HH (oos), 37053 CR-CR (oos), 42895 CF-CF (oos)-HH, 42898 CF-CF (oos)-CR-CF (oos), 42922 CF-CF (oos), 42931 CF-CF (oos), 42932 CF-CF (oos)-CF, 42933 CF-CR, 42956 CF-CF (oos)-HH, 44001 HH-CF, 44002 HH-CF, 44003 HH-CF, 44080 HH-CF, 44081 HH-CF, 47650 BN-HH, 66730 CF-CF (oos), 66760 BN-CF, 66813 BN-CF, 66819 BN-BN (oos), 66825 BN-BN (oos), 69912 BN (oos)-BN, 69919 BN-BN (oos)

As reported last month, many of the above (though not all) transfers took place over the Bank Holiday weekend, 28-30 August, in advance of schools returning and timetable changes from 1 September.

Right: The line-up of withdrawn vehicles at the front of Westway, Chelmsford on 3 September 2021, featuring some of the buses which are listed above. From left to right: 66826, 42932, 42922, 42956, 42898 and 66730. **David Edwards**. The gap between 42956 and 42898 was where 42895 had been, but this had been removed and reinstated at Hadleigh a few days beforehand. It is seen the same day, on route 26 at London Road, Leigh (below right) **John G Lidstone**. Since the top photo was taken all the Darts except for 42922 have returned to service. 66730 returned to service, at Colchester, on 8 October. By 23 September, 32640, 42931 and the Engineering Training bus 32052 (X578 RIW, illustrated in EBM 688) had joined the line-up. Of the other Darts in this photo, 42898 last worked at Chelmsford on 27 August, on route 45. It returned to service at Colchester on route 70 (all day) on 17 September but only lasted a week, its last day being on 23rd (see Harwich notes below). 42932 returned to service on 13 September, replacing 42931. As reported last month, 42956 also went to Hadleigh.



42895 was a replacement at Hadleigh for 33095 which is being cannibalised. 32640 (reported out of service in Period 5 last month) is withdrawn following accident damage it received in July. Its engine and gearbox have been removed.

Controversial Advert

Further to the paragraph and photo in EBM 689 about the controversial Channel 4 advert on the side of buses, a spokesperson for First told the media: "We're sorry for any upset caused by displaying C4's 'Altogether Different' advert on our buses. We're working with our advertising partner Global to ensure they are removed from our fleet as quickly as possible." (With thanks to Coach & Bus Week.)

School Services

The below reports cover the period 6 September-8 October 2021.

Colchester

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CR. All dates September 2021 except where stated and all both mornings and afternoons except where stated)

17, two-vehicle route: 30564 (6th-8th, 13th am, 14th, 15th, 16th am, 17th, 20th, 21st am, 24th, 29th am, 1 Oct am, 5 & 8 Oct), 31785 (6th-10th, 13th-16th, 17th am, 20th am, 21st, 22nd pm, 23rd, 24th, 27th, 28th am, 29th, 30th am, 1st Oct am, 4-8 Oct),

32068 (6 Oct), 32087 (9th, 4 Oct), 32673 (29th pm), 37004 (27th), 37005 (28th pm), 37006 (23rd am), 37007 (30th pm), 37010 (28th pm, 7 Oct), 37015 (20th pm, 28th am), 37034 (21st pm, 22nd am), 37035 (13th pm, 6 Oct pm), 37036 (16th pm), 37037 (5 Oct pm), 37042 (23rd pm, 24th am), 37054 (22nd am), 37135 (22nd pm), 37138 (10th am), 37139 (17th pm), 37140 (10th pm, 30th). Nothing reported 1 October pm.

67C: Further to EBM 689, reports for 1-3 September: 32547 (2nd), 66800 (1st am, nothing reported pm), 66828 (3rd).

6 September onwards: 32087 (24th pm), 37015 (13th), 37020 (10th), 37062 (20th), 37140 (28th), 63334 (8th am), 63335 (29th), 63339 (am), 63340 (4 & 6 Oct), 66804 (8th pm), 66810 (7th), 66816 (21st), 66828 (22nd, 30th, 7 Oct), 66970 (6th, 9th, 14th, 17th am), 66971 (16th, 1 Oct), 67736 (27th, 5 Oct), 67742 (15th), 67750 (23rd), 67756 (8 Oct). Nothing reported 17th pm.

Chelmsford

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CF. All dates September 2021 except where stated and all both mornings and afternoons except where stated.)

525: 32482 (20th pm, 21st, 24th pm, 27th am), 32484 (8 Oct pm), 32551 (28th, 29th, 1 & 4 Oct, 7 Oct am), 32631 (14th-16th, 17th pm, 5 & 6 Oct), 32641 (13th), 32672 (30th), 32676 (27th pm, 28th pm), 36837 (7th), 36838 (6th am), 36839 (10th), 36840 (8th, 20th am, 24th am, 7 Oct pm), 36841 (6th pm), 36842 (22nd, 23rd), 36843 (9th, 8 Oct am), 66814 (17th am).

570: 32482 (13th, 15th pm, 17th), 32483 (6th, 16th, 27th, 1 Oct), 32484 (7th, 28th am, 6 Oct), 32551 (22nd pm), 32631 (22nd am, 23rd, 24th, 4, 5 & 7 Oct), 32641 (8th, 10th, 29th, 30th), 32642 (4 Oct am), 32672 (9th, 20th, 8 Oct), 32676 (14th am, 15th am, 21st am). Nothing reported 14th or 21st pm.

620: 32482 (7th, 9th, 24th am, 28th am), 32483 (14th, 21st am, 29th pm), 32484 (10th pm, 22nd am, 28th pm), 32551 (6th, 16th pm, 21st pm, 30th pm, 6 Oct am), 32631 (8th, 10th am, 13th, 29th am, 30th am, 8 Oct pm), 32641 (22nd pm, 27th), 32642 (20th pm), 32672 (15th, 5 Oct pm, 7 Oct pm), 32676 (16th am, 20th am), 36837 (4 Oct, 6 Oct pm), 36838 (8 Oct am), 36840 (24th pm), 36841 (23rd), 36843 (17th, 5 Oct am, 7 Oct am). Nothing reported 1 October.

S33: 32482 (23rd), 32631 (17th am), 36837 (8th pm, 8 Oct), 36838 (8th am, 29th, 30th, 4 Oct, 7 Oct am), 36839 (14th, 16th, 28th, 1 Oct, 5 Oct am), 36840 (7th, 15th, 6 Oct), 36841 (6th am, 9th, 27th), 36842 (10th, 24th, 5 Oct pm), 36843 (13th, 22nd, 7 Oct pm), 67191 (17th pm), 67194 (21st), 67195 (20th). Nothing reported 6th pm. On 7th, 36840 also on first day of Tuesday only new route 35 (not a school service, but a feeder for S33), plus on Tuesdays 14th, 21st, 28th & 5 Oct the same buses on S33 also on 35. (On Tuesdays, the only day the 35 runs, Debden Park High School starts and finishes earlier.)

Basildon

(All vehicles listed below allocated to BN. All dates September 2021 except where stated and all both mornings and afternoons except where stated.)

561, two-vehicle route: 32260 (17th), 32526 (6th am, 1 Oct am, 5 Oct am), 32532 (6th-10th, 13th-17th, 20th-24th, 27th-30th, 1 Oct pm, 4 Oct, 5 Oct am, 6-8 Oct), 32539 (8th, 9th), 32540 (7th, 10th, 14th, 15th, 16th am, 20th-24th, 27th-30th, 1 Oct am, 4, 6-8 Oct), 33545 (13th), 33548 (5 Oct pm), 33551 (1 Oct pm), 33553 (5 Oct pm), 33557 (16th pm), 33572 (6th), 33574 (24th pm).

625: 32526 (20th pm, 1 Oct pm), 32531 (8 Oct), 33424 (6th-8th, 9th am, 13th-17th, 20th am, 21st, 22nd am, 23rd, 24th, 27th-30th, 4-7 Oct), 33545 (9th pm), 33553 (1 Oct am), 33557 (10th), 33561 (22nd pm).

725: 47651 (14th, 21st am, 29th, 1 Oct am, 4 & 6 Oct, 7 Oct pm), 47652 (8th pm, 20th, 24th, 28th pm, 5 Oct pm, 7 Oct am), 47654 (13th, 22nd, 23rd pm), 47655 (8th pm, 1 Oct pm, 5 Oct am), 47656 (6th, 7th, 30th am), 47657 (8th am, 9th, 15th-17th, 23rd am, 27th, 28th am), 47658 (10th, 21st pm, 30th pm, 8 Oct).

825: 32249 (1 Oct pm, 8 Oct pm), 32260 (24th am), 32526 (13th pm, 27th pm), 32539 (29th pm, 6 Oct pm), 33425 (9th pm, 15th pm, 23rd pm), 33504 (16th am, 20th am, 21st pm, 1 Oct am), 33507 (6th am, 8th am, 9th am, 15th am, 27th am, 28th am, 29th am, 4 Oct am, 5 Oct am, 8 Oct am), 33544 (6th pm, 10th am), 33545 (22nd pm), 33546 (21st am), 33551 (17th am), 33553 (23rd am), 33555 (7 Oct am), 33562 (22nd am), 33563 (7th am, 10th pm, 14th am, 6 Oct am), 33567 (7th pm, 8th pm, 30th pm, 5 Oct pm), 33568 (20th pm, 24th pm), 33570 (13th am), 33572 (14th pm, 30th am), 33573 (16th pm, 17th pm, 4 Oct pm), 33574 (7 Oct pm), 69908 (28th pm).

Hadleigh

(All vehicles listed below allocated to HH. All dates September 2021 except where stated and all both mornings and afternoons except where stated.)

822: 33098 (6 Oct pm, 7 Oct pm), 33133 (15th pm, 23rd pm, 27th pm, 4 Oct pm, 7 Oct am, 8 Oct pm), 33134 (13th pm, 16th am), 33136 (6th pm, 9th am), 33191 (9th am, 4 Oct am), 33232 (5 Oct pm), 33373 (17th am), 33376 (10th pm), 33383 (1 Oct am, 6 Oct pm, 8 Oct am), 33384 (20th am), 33402 (1 Oct pm), 33403 (8th am, 13th am, 15th am, 5 Oct am), 33405 (27th am, 29th am), 36216 (14th am), 36217 (7th am, 21st am, 23rd am, 24th pm, 29th pm), 36218 (21st pm, 30th am), 36219 (6th am, 17th pm), 36220 (10th am, 22nd am, 24th am), 37985 (20th pm), 37986 (28th am), 42956 (28th pm), 47520 (6th am), 47521 (22nd pm), 47523 (9th pm), 47526 (8th pm, 16th pm, 30th pm), 63161 (14th pm), 63162 (21st pm), 63166 (7th pm).

827: 33098 (22nd, 6 Oct am, 7 Oct am), 33133 (20th pm, 28th pm, 8 Oct am), 33134 (9th, 15th am), 33136 (16th am, 28th am, 5 Oct am), 33232 (8th), 33383 (6th am), 33384 (7th, 14th pm, 4 Oct am), 33385 (21st am, 6 Oct pm), 33401 (30th, 5 Oct pm), 33402 (24th am), 33403 (15th pm, 29th), 33405 (10th), 36218 (17th, 27th am), 36219 (13th), 36220 (20th am), 37985 (14th am),

37986 (21st pm, 23rd am, 1 Oct, 7 Oct pm), 47522 (24th pm), 47524 (23rd pm), 47526 (4 Oct pm, 8 Oct pm), 47646 (27th pm), 63163 (30th pm), 63165 (16th pm), 63331 (6th pm).

This section on School Services started when schools went back in September 2020, and illustrated the different vehicles used on these services, and the new routes, mostly now discontinued, introduced especially for use by schoolchildren during the pandemic. A year later and the services are mainly as they were pre-pandemic, with a much greater variety of buses used, rather than, in some cases, particular buses allocated just to school services. This section will therefore now be discontinued. Specific unusual or interesting school workings will in future appear under the general 'Other Area News & Workings'. Anyone who wants more information can still obtain this from Bustimes. It is to be hoped that future circumstances will not require the re-introduction of this section.

Other Area News & Workings

Like other companies, First Essex has suffered from the recent problems outlined in 'Service Revisions'. Each day they have posted on Twitter about service cuts for the day, although this mainly seemed to affect Basildon and to a lesser extent Hadleigh; Chelmsford and Colchester did not seem to be so badly affected. However, they did not provide reasons for the cuts. Then on 4 October they finally posted on Twitter "Like many businesses, we're currently experiencing a staff shortage due to a number of reasons. We're working to minimise disruption and we apologise if your service has been affected. We'll continue to update social media and the website with changes while we recruit new colleagues". See also 'Chelmsford' below for news on Park & Ride reductions.

Colchester

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

32669 has received an orange based overall advert for the new Halfords store in Colchester, first seen on 20 September. The front remains in two-tone blue. It is illustrated on page 1 and also seen right on route 61 in Colchester on 7 October (front photo in St John's Street, rear photo in Head Street). Both **Gareth Jones**

A photo of 32669 before it received this advert, also taken in Head Street, appeared in EBN 683.

63344 has received a super rear advert for Colchester Institute.

News of the Harwich routes (2 September - 4 October).

With the new timetable from 1 September (see EBM 689) the vehicle duties are as follows:

Mondays to Fridays

1. Morning peak hour duty, normally double deck:

0610 Colchester - Maldon 75, 0711 Maldon - Colchester 75, dead to Berechurch, 0825 Berechurch Lethe Grove - Colchester 67, dead to Mistley, 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103, then works as required.

2. All day duty, normally single deck, all route 104, all full route between Harwich and Colchester:

0605, 0900, 1200, 1500, 1800 ex Harwich, 0720, 1030, 1330, 1630, 1930 ex Colchester.

3. All day duty, sd or dd, all route 104 except where stated, all full route between Harwich and Colchester:

0700, 1000, 1300, 1600, 1900 (102) ex Harwich, 0830, 1130, 1430, 1732, 2035 (102) ex Colchester.

4. All day duty, single deck or double deck:

Schooldays 0715 Harwich - Colchester Head Street 103, or non-schooldays 0715 Harwich - Colchester Stanwell

Street 103, dead to Berechurch, 0900 Berechurch Lethe Grove - Colchester 67, 0930 Colchester - Harwich 104, 1100 Harwich - Colchester 104, 1230 Colchester - Harwich 104, 1400 Harwich - Colchester 104, 1530 Colchester - Harwich 103, 1700 Harwich - Colchester 104, 1825 Colchester - Harwich 103.

Saturdays

Three buses, normally single deck, on all day 103/104, one finishes on 1900 Harwich - Colchester 102. A fourth single-decker comes off 67 to work 2035 Colchester - Harwich 102, 2215 Harwich - Colchester 102, 2335 Colchester - Harwich 102.



Sundays

Three buses, normally double deck, sometimes single deck, work the Sunday 102 journeys, interworking with Colchester - Maldon 75.

In this period, there have been twenty-one double-deckers on routes 102/103/104, but on Mondays to Fridays most of these have been on duty 1, 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103. Only seven double-deckers served Harwich on Mondays to Fridays in this period: 32628, 32669, 37005, 37015, 37017, 37035 and 37042. Saturdays have been all single-deck. The Sunday allocation has been mainly double deck, but on 12 September a mixed allocation of 37034, 66970 and 67750. On 26th a single deck allocation of 66800, 66801 and 67750. On other Sundays the double-deck allocation brought five more double-deckers to Harwich on 102 in addition to those on Mondays to Fridays: 37004, 37006, 37007, 37034 and 37062.

Single-deckers on 102/103/104 have been all ten of the Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse allocated to Colchester, plus ten of the twelve ADL Enviro 300 (67755/6 not seen), and seven Wright StreetLites.

63335 (2 September), 67738 (7th), 63333 (9th) on duty 1 instead of a double-decker; 67738 on duty 2 (3rd) but had problems on 0900 Colchester - Harwich 104 and was replaced by 32669 which worked 1030 Colchester - Harwich 104 and continued on the duty. A Dart, reinstated 42898 (see 'Allocation Changes' above), was unusual on duty 4 on 23 September (which, at time of writing, was its last day in service).

A brief history of routes 103 & 104 since 30 April 1972 starts on page 29.

On the Clacton routes:

74B: 30564 (4 Oct), 32068 (1 Oct), 32485 (14th), 32547 (8th, 10th, 5 Oct), 32669 (22nd), 32673 (17th), 37004 (21st), 37005 (9th), 37006 (15th, 6 Oct), 37007 (7th, 9 Oct), 37016 (7 Oct), 37017 (16th), 37020 (20th, 2 Oct), 37034 (25th, 28th), 37035 (24th), 37036 (13th, 30th), 37042 (27th), 37062 (11th), 37135 (8 Oct), 37136 (18th), 37139 (6th), 63339 (29th).

76 (in date order): 66826 (12th), 67741 (19th), 67779 (26th), 67737 (3 Oct), 37027 (10 Oct).

67737 on 70 all day on 21st.

Chelmsford

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

The Park & Ride is once again a through service Sandon to Chelmer Valley via Chelmsford City centre. This is numbered 701, although the route number isn't carried on vehicles. From 11 September, the basic daytime service was increased to every 10 minutes. This is supplemented by a Sandon - Chelmsford - Sandon 700 in morning and afternoon peaks on M-F and three early morning journeys on Saturdays. However, from Monday 27 September, the basic daytime service was reduced again, to every 15 minutes, but two of these journeys each hour are 700 Sandon circulars, so the Chelmer Valley site's service was reduced from every 10 minutes to every half an hour. The reduction was due to the national driver shortage and is to allow drivers to be diverted to support the commercial network of services. The reduction was due to last until 30 October. P&R vehicles continue to work on other routes (although less so between 11 and 25 September when the P&R service had been increased), some examples noted being 67196 (7th) & 67192 (8th) on 351; 67196 on 72 (8th); 67191 (17th pm), 67194 (21st plus route 35), 67195 (20th) on S33; 67190 (22nd) & 67191 (11th) on 42. Conversely, 66810 (24th) and 67160 (17th) on P&R.

Other unusual / interesting workings: X30 liveried Scania continue to work on route 70 on schooldays. 44914 on 71C (Sunday 3 Oct). 66812 (4 Oct), 66837 (8 Oct), 69433 (5 & 6 & 7 Oct) and 67196 (8th) on double deck route 72 (which serves Chelmsford Retail Market and is diverted away from Duke Street bridge). First reported sighting of 66860 in use as a driver trainer was on 6 September.

Basildon & Hadleigh

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

HH42895 was on loan to Basildon on 11, 12 & 13 September, noted on routes 9 and 8A. On 13th it was on 5 during the day but back at Hadleigh on 21B & 20 in the evening. It is quite possible it was also at BN on 9th & 10th, it was on route 25 both of those days, which is worked by both BN & HH but mainly the former. HH42487 was on loan to Basildon on 15 & 16 September, noted on routes 5 and 100.

Route 9 continues to be mainly Enviro 400 operated but with at least one StreetLite each day. An exception on Saturday 18th was only one Enviro 400 and four StreetLites. Other types of double-decker noted have been 32249 (7th), 32260 (1 Oct), 32526 (22nd, 28th, 29th, 6 Oct), 32531 (25th, 30th), 32539 (4, 7 & 8 Oct), 32540 (18th) and 33086 (8th). On loan from Hadleigh 42895 was an unusual Dart on Saturday 11th, mini-Enviro 200 44909 was also on the route on that day.

Routes 94/A continued to be mainly operated by a StreetLite and a mini-Enviro 200 or two StreetLites. Double-deckers noted: 33424 (Saturday 9 Oct), 33545 (Saturday 2 Oct, replacing 44909 on the 0857 from Basildon, 6 Oct), 33546 (6th, Saturday 11th).

Other unusual / interesting workings: non-Enviro 200 MMCs on X10: 47657 (26th), 69901 (7 Oct), 69906 (15th) & 69914 (30th). 32249 (5 Oct), 32539 (24th), 33425 (16th), 33544 (27th), 33546 (10th), 33548 (28th, 30th), 33555 (20th), 33557 (6th), 33558 (20th), 33561 (4 Oct), 33562 (7 Oct), 33570 (17th), 33572 (5 Oct) double-deckers on route 100. This is far more common than previously, but now that the route is split in two, the section from Basildon to Lakeside is not restricted by the low bridge in Duke Street, Chelmsford. It is assumed most if not all of these workings were on the Basildon-Lakeside section, although this is not confirmed.

Mini-Enviro 200 44909 also on 100 on 19th. 33545 (27th), 33546 (25th) and 33555 (1 Oct) double-deckers on 16. Mini-Enviro 200 44910 on 25 (8th & 13th). 44908 (19th, 10 Oct), 44909 (26th) and 44910 (12th) on 251. HH69519 on 20 & 27 during the day and evening (21st) and again on evening 27 the next day.

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Stephen Barham, Dale Bell, Jon Collins, Robert Downton, David Edwards, John Lidstone, Philip Mansbridge, John Podgorski, Andrew Toms, Robert West, First Essex, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

Below: The X30 Scania's did not have fleet numbers on the front when delivered but 36841 has now received a large front fleet number (no others have been seen with one). At Eastwood Rise on Rayleigh Road 28 August 2021. **John G Lidstone.**

Bottom: The Scania's have started to receive these adverts on the side, on the nearside they carry just fare details. Different combinations of places & fares are on different vehicles. 36837 at Southend Travel Centre on 28 September 2021. **Adam Kelleher**



Colchester and Southend have a new general manager, Scott Hayward. The previous GM, Graham Wykes, has moved on to Northfleet.

Southend

Vehicles

6503 has been off the road since mid-August following accident damage and is expected back soon after repair, possibly repainted into the latest Arriva livery; it is not thought that this is the start of a repaint programme for the Enviro 400s generally.

Services

There has been no resumption of the contracted out school duplicates following the start of the new school year. The fuel delivery crisis at the end of September and into the start of October caused widespread disruption and diversions to buses, as traffic queueing outside petrol stations blocked roads. For example, service 1 was regularly diverted away from Southchurch Road and 29 was sometimes curtailed at the Woodcutters, whilst 7/8 suffered serious delays through Rochford and Hockley.

On Sunday 3 October the main intersection between Eastwood Road, Rayleigh High Street and Crown Hill was closed for road works. This meant that buses couldn't go down to the station to turn around (routes 1/7/8/9). 1 terminated short at the Weir. The others used Bull Lane, Jubilee Road and Trinity Road. So Optare Versa 4258, KX13 AVE, is seen on route 8 in Eastwood Road outside Rayleigh Clinic, about to head back to Hockley via Websters Way. It would have turned left into Bull Lane from Websters Way. **Philip Mansbridge**



On Thursday 7 October services were heavily disrupted at certain times due to road closures for the A J Bell Women's Tour cycle race stage 4 which started in Shoebury at 1100 and took around 90 riders on a 118 km route through Wakering, Rochford, Ashingdon, Hullbridge, Rettendon then on a loop round the Dengie peninsula before heading back via Rayleigh, Eastwood, Leigh and Westcliff and finishing on Southend seafront (Western Esplanade) mid-afternoon. Services of First and Stephenson's were also affected. The following day, Friday 8 October the race moved on to a Colchester to Clacton route, and then on the Saturday from Haverhill to Felixstowe, in each case disrupting bus services of various operators. The organisers blithely say that "roads will only be closed for a short window – approximately 30 minutes" but anyone who understands bus scheduling will realise the chaos this causes with a knock-on effect lasting many hours!

Colchester

Vehicles

There is no further news yet on the buses being acquired for the Park & Ride contract, which was renewed from 26 September (with no change to the route but frequency increased to every 15 minutes, now requiring three buses). As in Southend, the fuel supply crisis caused some disruption and diversions due to queues outside filling stations.

Short Dart 1565 (HX04 HUK) was sent to Southend on 1 October, we are unsure whether this is for storage or service use there.

Services

The free shuttle bus from Braintree town centre to the Freeport shopping centre ceased at the start of the Covid crisis and has not been reinstated. It is not a registered service so there is no official notification of changes but our assumption is that it has probably ceased permanently.

Harlow

Optare Versa 4237 (KX13 DHG) has received current light blue fleet livery, completing the Versa repaints at Harlow.

With thanks to Keith Sadler, Matthew Evans, Nigel Turner, Philip Mansbridge, Peter Mansbridge.

Services

Due to the nationwide driver shortage, an emergency timetable has been in operation on route 38/A (Witham - Braintree - Halstead), with the section from Bocking to Halstead reduced to hourly. It is also understood that the morning peak service on route 6A to Leigh station has been suspended from mid-September.

With thanks to the companies and Nigel Turner



Above: Stephenson's operations creep closer to the capital with Essex CC route 804 commencing last month. As predicted in EBM 687, Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 301 is being used on the route. It awaits the afternoon departure from West Hatch School at Chigwell, just a few hundred metres from the London Borough of Redbridge boundary, on 15 September. **Owen Woodliffe**

Below: Stephenson's OmniDekka 902 at Felsted on 3 September, on the first 451 journey of the new school year. **John Podgorski**



Acquired Vehicles

294 OU57 FGZ ADL Mini Enviro 200 ex Konectbus by 29 September 2021.

An unidentified Konectbus Enviro 400 was delivered to CN by suspended tow on 2 October.

Vehicles Withdrawn

569	W484 WGH	Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President withdrawn at CN
570	W487 WGH	Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President withdrawn at HD
571	W488 WGH	Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President withdrawn at CN
574	W506 WGH	Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President long term VOR at CN mechanical issues
575	W516 WGH	Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President withdrawn at KN

Significant Allocations

262	CN - KN	by 30 September
283	KN -CN	by 22 September
510	HD - KN	by 3 September returned to HD by around 16 September
513	HD - KN	by 20 September until 22 September
517	HD - KN	by 3 September
910	CN - KN	by 3 September (both 910/11 at KN by w/c 26 September)

Fleet News

258, EU56 FLN, Alexander Dennis Dart SLF, is the first of the 56 registration batch of SLFs to be treated to a refurbishment, consisting of panel straightening, repaint to new livery and reupholstered. It re-entered service in Clacton on 24 September. The upholstery was completed at Hants & Dorset trim. It is seen below parked up in Jackson Road, Clacton on the early afternoon of Saturday 2 October, a result of the shortage of drivers having worked the 136 earlier in the day and parked up awaiting next duty. **Mark Lloyd**



ADL Mini Enviro 200 294 OU57 FGZ has re-joined the fleet and is currently awaiting repaint. Another Enviro 200 is reportedly in for repaint before 294 can be so treated. 294 had previously ran in the Hedingham fleet from October 2017 to June 2019 before being transferred to Konectbus. It is still in the remnants of the bus ticket app advertisement it had when acquired from Thames Travel in

2017 and adapted by Hedingham before transfer to Konectbus. (Previous acquisition details in EBN 643 and withdrawal details in EBN 663, with photos in EBNs 644, 650 & 659.)

Service News

Further to the article on route 134 in last month's magazine, Scania OmniDekka 818 was on the route on 6 September and Scania OmniCity 850 the next day. From 6th, the route now operates 0901 to 1443, it has lost its late afternoon summer journeys. Ironically the reduced timetable and cessation of using open-top 500 on the route coincided with improved weather, hotter than it had been in all of August!

The reference to the Clacton Air Show last month wasn't strictly correct, it was actually called the Clacton 150 Anniversary Flight programme this year, the Air Show being cancelled.

Due to a shortage of drivers, from 3 September Hedingham suspended service of off peak services in Clacton and also utilised one Panther Travel vehicle and driver using a Hedingham ticket machine on service 3 to Harwich. Emergency timetables were immediately implemented on routes 4, X76, 97, 136 and 137 Monday to Fridays, and 4/5/6/X76/97/98/136/137 on Saturdays. Not all routes from Clacton are affected and seemingly this hasn't affected services from other depots.

Enviro 200 AB10 PAN started work on route 3 on Saturday 4 September, the vehicle utilised tends to run all day on one duty of the service. It is seen below on the first day, 4 September, at Harwich, photo taken by its driver **Stephen Barham**.



New service 40 started on 4 October, an ECC contract replacing Ugobus, a circular of Witham serving Collingwood Road, Railway Station, Morrisons and Ebenezer Close. Monday, Wednesday and Saturday only from 0902 (Sat) or 1002 (Mon / Wed) until 1735 with differing timetables for school and non-school weekdays. Worked by an Enviro 200 or Solo from KN depot. Enviro 200 296 worked the inaugural journey.

Other News

Vauxhall Combo van 9003 FN54 SXC gone by 17 September.

With thanks to Adam Barham, Andrew Colebourne, John Podgorski and the Hedingham website



Above: It was reported in EBM's 688 & 689 that three round trips on service 63 were extended from West Mersea to & from East Mersea on Mondays - Fridays (excluding Bank Holiday) from 22 July until 31 August 2021. OmniDekka 813 is seen at East Mersea on 22 July, the first day of the summer holiday extension. **John Podgorski**. This provides a good comparison with the Lowlander body opposite.

This month's report is dominated by the new school term starting in September.

For Suffolk Rural College at Otley, north of Ipswich, the new term started on 2 September and contract RC1, Thorrington Crossroads - Alresford - Wivenhoe - Colchester, then non-stop to Suffolk Rural College, restarted with a change of vehicle. 1 (SGZ 3351) Volvo B7R / Jonckheere Modulo is now allocated to RC1, noted working this contract on 8/9 September.

East Bergholt High School's new term started on 3 September. Ipswich Buses have eight routes requiring nine-double-deckers serving this school, three of which carry pupils from Essex:

0755 Colchester - Ipswich 93, and 1500 Ipswich - Colchester 93: normally worked by one of the three refurbished Scania N94UD/East Lancs Omnidekkas 60/61/62 (PJ54 YVT/U/V). The new-to-Network Colchester Scania / OmniDekka 63 (YN06 TFZ) worked the 0755 ex Colchester 93 on 29 September.

0813 from Ardleigh 693, via Lawford, Mistley New Road, Manningtree, and Brantham, return journey departs East Bergholt High School at 1545. On the first day of this new service, 3 September, 56 (PN52 XBK) DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlander was used as seen opposite leaving East Bergholt High School. Behind 56 is a recent addition to the fleet, 64 (OU54 PGZ), Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekka new to Thames Travel in 2005. Acquired from Vision Bus of Blackrod near Bolton, whose livery it retains. 64 is allocated to school contract 635 Capel St Mary - East Bergholt High School, so has not yet been spotted in Essex. **Robert Appleton**.

Since 3 September service 693 has been worked by a DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlander or Scania OmniCity.

0821 from Langham 694 (renumbered from 194), via Boxted, Dedham Gun Hill, and Stratford St Mary, return journey departs East Bergholt High School at 1545. On most days 694 has been worked by 55 (PN52 XBO) DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlander. 55 was also allocated to the previous service 194. Sisters 56 (PN52 XBK), 58/9 (PJ53 OLA/B) have also worked on 694 instead of 55.



Ipswich School's new term started on 7 September. Ipswich Buses worked five contracts in the 2020/21 academic year, now this has increased to eleven. To cater for this expansion, three more Scania OmniCities have been acquired from RATP London United via Ensignbus (dealer), who converted them to single-door, re-seated them, and fitted seat-belts. The three are 49/50/51 (YN08 DHE/F/X) with 49/50 currently in overall white livery, and 51 in overall red livery. In addition, the two coaches acquired from Go North East earlier this year, 2/3 (BX65 WDA/D), Volvo B11RT / Caetano Levante, also work on Ipswich School contracts. All buses and coaches used on these contracts are fitted with seat-belts.

Six of the eleven school contracts serve Essex, and on the afternoon of 9 September they were worked by:

- 49 (YN08 DHE) on 2A to Colchester Tollgate and Feering (New Lane)
- 47 (SGZ 3347) Scania OmniCity on 2B to Langham, Boxted and Colchester (Braiswick)
- 46 (SGZ 3346) Scania OmniCity on 2C to Colchester and Langenhoe
- 73 (YX59 BZN) ADL Enviro 200 (8.9m long) on 3 to Dedham Heath and Dedham
- 2 (BX65 WDA) on 6 to Wakes Colne, Halstead and Castle Hedingham
- 74 (DU60 LOI) Enviro 200 (10.8m long) on 10 to Lawford, Bradfield, Tendring, Frinton (Rail Gates) and Holland-on-Sea.

With the new school terms started, and an increase in the PVR, there is now less variety in terms of the Enviro 200s used on services 2/A/4/11. Of the four 8.9m long Enviro 200s 70-73, one always works Ipswich School contract 3 due to the narrow roads around Dedham Heath. One works Clacton - Mistley 2/A, and the other two work Colchester routes 4/11. If all four are not available, then a 10.8m long Enviro 200 is used, those spotted on 2/A/4/11 have been: 74 (DU60 LOI) 2/A on 24 September, 4/11 on 28th, 77 (KX59 GNY) 4/11 on 15th, 2/A on 28th, 84 (MX09 HHS) 4/11 on 17th, 2/A on 1 October, 101 (SN16 OGG) 4/11 on 28/29 September. 74 has seat-belts fitted and is normally used on Ipswich School contracts.

A surprise return to Ipswich Buses at the end of August was the former 71 (YN56 NVC) a Scania OmniCity single-decker. Withdrawn by Ipswich Buses in 2019, 71 had been with Happy Al's Coaches of Birkenhead. Ipswich Buses have converted 71 into a mobile COVID-19 vaccination centre, retaining Happy Al's red livery, with lettering for "NHS Community Vaccination Team" and "in collaboration with Ipswich Buses". 71 appeared on the BBC TV 'Look East' programme on 13 September, from the Colchester Institute for Further Education in an item about vaccinations for teenagers. The other mobile vaccination bus, Enviro 200 83 (KX58 GUW), still in white livery, was at work in Dovercourt on 1 September.

Scania OmniCities 37, 40, 46, 47 & 48 were on planned Greater Anglia rail replacement duties over the weekend of 25-26 September, working between Colchester and Ingatstone.

With thanks to Ipswich Buses website, Suffolk on Board website, Ipswich Transport Society Journal, Ipswich Buses Enthusiast Facebook Group, Bustimes



Ensignbus

omnibus suppliers to the world

by Mark Lloyd

Dealer Stock Movements August 2021

Vehicles In August 2021

From **Carters Heritage Services**: Tridents LK05 GFV/GGV - as reported under 'Other Operators' in EBM 689

From **Lothian**: B9TLs SN09 CTK/O, SN08 BYH/K-M/O/P/R/T/U/V

From **Maymist Coaches**: Volvo B9R FJ60 HYK

From **Metroline**: Volvo B9TLs LK59 FCP/CXC

From **Rotala**: Mercedes-Benz 814s KX60 DWF/O, KX09 SOU

From **Stagecoach Cumbria**: Tridents S817 BWC, V196/8/9 MEV, Solo KX51 CTE, Volvo B12M YS02 YXT

From **Tower Transit**: Volvo B7TLs LK04 HYG/H, Darts LN51 DWJ, KP02 PUF/PVO/PWN/PWO. PVO on to Galleon next month, see below.

Vehicles Out August 2021

Solo YJ60 LRN: **A2B, Cambridge**

Volvo B9TLs BN16 MXA-B/D-E/H: **Atlantic Travel, Manchester**

Volvo B7TL WR03 YZM: **Barway Services, Ely**

Scania YN56 FBA: **Change.org, London**

Volvo B9TLs SN09 CTK/O: **Happy AI's, Liverpool**

Volvo B9TL SN08 BXY: **Heyfordian, Bicester**

Volvo B7TL KP51 WAU: **Internic Ltd, Bournemouth**

Scania YN08 DHE, Volvo B7RLE SK07 CGO: **Ipswich Buses** - see previous page re the Scania

Volvo B7RLE SK07 CGU: **Jacks Coaches, Middlesbrough**

Volvo B7TLs W733/4 DWX: **Marchants Coaches, Cheltenham**

Enviro 400s SN11 BSY/Z/BTE/O: **Redbridge Council**

Enviro 400 LK08 DXV: **Ricardo UK, Shoreham**

Volvo B7L LX05 GEI: **Seven Sisters Bus & Coach, Eastbourne**

Olympian P270 VPN: **Sussex Buses, Shoreham**

Enviro 400s LJ08 CYP, SN11 BRF/BPZ: **Warrington's Own Buses**

Scania YN08 DHG/J, YN56 FCG/J: **Weardale Motor Services, Co Durham**

Scania YT59 PBU: **XLP, London**

Volvo B9TLs LK59 FCP/CXC are on long term hire to **HCT London**

Dealer Stock Movements September 2021

Vehicles In September 2021

From **Abellio London**: Enviro 400s LJ09 CAA/E/O/U/V/X/CBF/O/U/X/Y/CCA/D/E/F/N/O/U

From **Go Ahead London**: Enviro 400s SN06 BNB, LX07 BYH, Volvo B7TL LX05 EZB, Volvo B9TL LX60 DWN, StreetCar T6 FCC (note StreetCars are Wrightbus 'streamline' articulated buses), Enviro 200s LX07 BXR/BXW/BYA, SN57 DWK/DW/DXA

From **Metroline**: Volvo B9TLs LK59 CWY/CXD/CXE/CXM/FCU

From **Stagecoach South East**: Trident LV52 HFP

From **Stagecoach South West**: Solo YJ15 AAK

Vehicles Out September 2021

A.M. Jacques Ltd, Bedworth, Warwickshire: Volvo B7RLEs SN55 BJJ/K

Axe Valley, Seaton, Devon: Volvo B9TLs LK59 CXD/E

Belle Vue, Manchester: Enviro 400s SN11 BRV/Z/BSO/U/V

Bear Buses, Feltham: Volvo B9TL LX60 DWN

Canavan Travel, Glasgow: Enviro 200s LK08 DWO, YX58 DWC

Candy Coaches, Morden Surrey: Scania YN56 FCC

Chambers, Maidstone: Volvo B7TL WR03 YZU

Connexions Buses, Harrogate: Scania YN08 DHK

Galleon Travel, Roydon Essex: Dart KP02 PVO - see page 22

Grant Palmer, Dunstable: Volvo B9TLs SN08 BXS/U
Hawkes Tours, Derby: Volvo B7TLs KP51 WCX/VZW
Heyfordian, Bicester: Volvo B7RLEs SK07 CFV/Z
Imperial Coaches, Slough: Volvo B9TLs SK07 CAX/CCA/CBO/U/V
Ipswich Buses: Scania YN08 DHF/X - see page 19
Juliane Hillman, Uckfield: Volvo B7RLE SN55 BJU
Mikes Coaches, Basildon: Volvo B7TL KP51 WBT
Redbridge Council: Enviro 400s SN11 BSX/BTU
Redline Buses, Aylesbury: Enviro 400 LK08 NVL
Sharpes Coaches, Nottingham: Volvo B7TL LT52 WWG
Shoreline Scarborough: Volvo B7TL WR03 YZT
Sindher Driving School, Slough: Enviro 200 LJ09 KPV
Skills Coaches, Nottingham: Volvo B9TLs SN08 BXX/Z/BYA/D/F/G
York Pullman: DAF DB20s LJ51 DKK/N

To Shelton Motors for scrap

StreetCar T6 FCC
 Darts KP02 PUF, LN51 DWJ
 Trident V198 MEV
 Volvo B7TL W541 WGH

Ensignbus Fleet

Fourteen new Wrightbus StreetDecks are being delivered, as illustrated on the front cover. Details as follows.

168	LX71 AOB	SC5DDRDXXU21000239	AT582	H45/29F	09/21
169	LX71 AOC	SC5DDRDXXU21000240	AT583	H45/29F	09/21
170	LX71 AOD	SC5DDRDXXU21000241	AT584	H45/29F	09/21
171	LX71 AOE	SC5DDRDXXU21000242	AT585	H45/29F	09/21
172	LX71 AOG	SC5DDRDXXU21000243	AT586	H45/29F	09/21
173	LX71 AOH	SC5DDRDXXU21000244	AT587	H45/29F	09/21
174	LX71 AOJ	SC5DDRDXXU21000245	AT588	H45/29F	09/21
175	LX71 AOK	SC5DDRDXXU21000246	AT589	H45/29F	09/21
176	LX71 AOL	SC5DDRDXXU21000247	AT590	H45/29F	09/21
177	LX71 AOM	SC5DDRDXXU21000248	AT591	H45/29F	09/21
178	LX71 AON	SC5DDRDXXU21000249	AT592	H45/29F	09/21
179	LX71 AOO	SC5DDRDXXU21000250	AT593	H45/29F	09/21
180	LX71 AOP	SC5DDRDXXU21000251	AT594	H45/29F	09/21
181	LX71 AOR	SC5DDRDXXU21000252	AT595	H45/29F	09/21

177 attended Showbus on 26 September and was the first to enter service on 1 October.

As a consequence of these deliveries all Volvo B9TL / Olympus will be withdrawn and sold with the exception of 120, PN58 NRE. Two have already gone, 111, PN58 NPG, has been sold to Starline Coaches, Mereworth, Kent and 112, PN58 NPJ, to Redline, Aylesbury.

The new Euro VI Volvo tow-truck has been re-registered to EB20 TOW.

Services

The daily service on route 68 was extended until 12 September, then a final weekend for this year on 18th-19th. On the last day, a third open-top mini-running day for this summer was held, with all fares on the day going to the RNLI. Routemaster RM371, ex Eastern National Leyland 2102 and the B-type replica, which had all appeared previously this summer, were in operation, and also Daimler Fleetline 333 (EGP 33J), making its first appearance of the year (this had been used on last year's running day, illustrated in EBN 678). Further to EBM 689, on the second open-top mini-running day on route 68 on 29 August, an unusual first for Ensignbus was the operation of the B type replica B1439 (which is actually a 1967 Bedford VAM14/E.L. Farrar replica) on the evening last 68 of the day, which runs to Lakeside - not as a duplicate but as the actual departure! That's the first time the B has ever run to Lakeside and unexpectedly as the sole bus on the departure.

On 9 September, it was reported that due to a chronic shortage of drivers, six Stagecoach South East school services are being operated by Ensignbus, four workings out of Herne Bay and two out of Ashford. That afternoon Olympus bodied Volvo B9TL 115 was noted on service 906 to Herne Bay.

With thanks to Ross Newman and John Lidstone.

Acquired Vehicle

KP02 PVO, Transbus Dart, B30D, new to Armchair DP1028, 06/02. From Tower Transit (DP42604) via Ensignbus, September 2021.

Withdrawn Vehicle

Solo YJ09 MHO has been withdrawn from service, it last operated on 6 July this year.

Services

In EBN 683 it was reported that from 11 April this year, Central Connect were taking over Hertfordshire County Council contract services 308/380, 378/379, 333, M1/M2/M3/M4/M5 from Centrebus. There was one error in this list, M1 should have read C1. These were short-term contracts and the routes have now been retendered. From 28 September routes 308/380, 378/379, C1, M2-M5 all passed to Arriva. 333 was due to pass to Vectare from the same date, both the Monday-Saturday and separate Sunday contracts (the latter includes the Sunday H4, Hertford-Horns Mill, Cecil Road) but Vectare withdrew and so the routes remain with Central Connect. No change to H1/2/3 or Monday to Saturday H4 which were not part of the tender exercise and also stay with Central Connect. A photo of Solo YJ09 MHO, climbing Widbury Hill on Ware local route M4, passing the former Plaxton (originally Thurgood) Coachworks site, taken on 15 April was on the inside front cover of EBN 685.

Solos in Hertford Bus Station

Right: RGZ 7809, in Central Connect livery, on route 379 which has since passed to Arriva.



Right: It was reported last month that SGZ 2223 had been repainted from First Barbie to Central Connect livery over the weekend of 14-15 August. However, sister SGZ 2221 (ex WX05 RUC) remains in First livery, although, as can be seen, this has now been amended with a blue upswept section at the rear. Photos of this bus in non-amended livery were in EBNs 682 & 684.

Both photos taken 15 September 2021 by Allan White.



With thanks to Melvyn King, Bus Lists on the Web and LOTS

Acquired Vehicles

The two former National Holidays Tourisimos reported in EBM 687, NH17 EFH/HFH, have been re-registered W12/11 VEC respectively. Both are now in Vectare fleet livery and are now based at Rettendon (previously thought to be at Loughborough).

As reported last month, recently acquired 316, YX16 OBO, entered service on 3 September. When it did so, it had stick-on vinyls for route 13 covering the destination screens: a large '13' on the offside front, with 'Waltham Cross' above 'Epping' on the nearside at the front, a smaller version of this combination on the front nearside window and a large '13' on the rear. By 9 September the front and side screens had LED displays (these replaced the original roller blinds) although the rear still had the vinyls, as seen, right, on that day at Waltham Cross on a short working from Waltham Abbey on route 22 which is interworked with the 13.

Owen Woodliffe

Disposals

Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus 301-4 have been sold, despite 302-304 being repainted into fleet livery earlier this year (see EBN 683, including a photo, re the first two, 304 hadn't previously been reported but was repainted by 12 April). 302/3 (BK13 NZR/S) were seen with Stotts of Oldham in September, still in Vectare livery but with Stotts fleet names.

Other News

Solo 299 was involved in a collision near Hook End on 18 September and is currently off road awaiting assessment. Services on 61A were suspended for the rest of that day (with the company's social media asking customers to submit taxi fare receipts if incurred) and resumed on Monday 20th, operated by 316, as seen, right, on that day in Brentwood High Street, although sister 317 (YX16 OBS) was noted on the 61 on at least 24th (its first reported day in service). **Chris Stewart**

A hired Enviro 200, YX67 UXO, took over from 28th September as 316 was also then undergoing work. New to Jeatt (White Bus) of Winkfield, Berks, it carries an all-white livery and has temporary fleet number 989. It is seen, bottom right, in Blackmore, on 29th.

Steven Quy

Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 202 (WV20 VDG) has also been on loan from Leicestershire for use at Waltham Abbey. This has previously been used in Essex (see EBN 678)

An application has been made for an eight vehicle operating centre at The Bus and Coach Hub, Robert Way, Wickford SS1 8DD (which is Hailstone Travel's address).

Further to EBM 688, school route S13 was re-introduced for the Autumn Term, replacing one 13 journey each way.

With thanks to Owen Woodliffe and Steven Quy



Other Operators

by Roger A Smith

Airport Bus, Stansted Airport

BX65 WBL, a Scania K360EB4, with Caetano C49FL body, has gone to Cymru Coaches, Waunarlwydd, South Wales.

Don's of Dunmow

Acquired is BMC Condor YJ56 LNC, new to West Yorkshire MyBus, but latterly with Lakeside, Ellesmere. It is running in as acquired green / white. Also acquired is East Lancs bodied Scania N23 OUD OmniDekka YN07 EXG from Go-Goodwins, Eccles, Greater Manchester. Leyland Olympian F602 MSL has been sold for preservation.

Fourways Coaches, Highwood

Volvo B7TL with Wrightbus H44/30F body, registration SN56 AGY, is here, formerly with Xelabus, Coldon Common, Hampshire, whilst Alexander Belfast bodied Leyland Olympian G981 FVX has gone from here. This vehicle was originally registered as 90-D-1009 in the Republic of Ireland.

Right: **AJK Coaches, Ilford** is running school contracts into Colchester again for 2021/22. A newcomer is this Yutong Tc12; A15 YEL, seen at Southway, Colchester on 3 September 2021. **John Podgorski**



Below: **ACME Transport, Stansted** Optare Solo YN53 SVX resting between school services at Ugley on 17 September 2021. **John Podgorski**



Flagfinders, Braintree

NIL 7251 (ex YN53 RZD), a Scania N94UD with East Lancs H45/32F body, is here from Wheelers Travel, North Baddesley, Hampshire.

Klarmers Coaches, Colchester

The acquisition of YN05 WKE, a Scania L94UB / Wrightbus, was reported in EBN 681. This has now been sold to Panther Travel, September 2021.

With thanks to Alex Hazell, John Podgorski and the PSV Circle

Letters

John Salmon from Little Waltham

Little Waltham Classic Car Show

My wife and I took our 1998 MGF to the classic car show in Little Waltham on Sunday 5 September (as illustrated below). This event was held with the open gardens which was raising funds for Farleigh Hospice.

A surprise visitor was preserved ex Westcliff Bristol K / ECW AJN 825. Although I had seen many photos of AJN, this was the first time I had managed a tour of this interesting vehicle. We were given a detailed history of its life by one of the guardians. I did not realise that originally it had a canvas roof which rolled back into a storage box at the rear. It reminded me of the London Transport RLHs which used to operate the 248 and 248A routes in Upminster. We used to live in Front Lane Cranham, near the low railway bridge which was the reason for their use. When I went to school on the 165 route from Hornchurch garage I used to see these splendid vehicles being stabled there. The 248A variant was the shortest route in London, 3/4 mile, but this did not pass under the low bridge.

I also met Andrew Lodge who had brought the open sided Bedford OB and the Model T Ford. As always he was very enthusiastically displaying a sample of the heritage Lodge's fleet.



Doug Brown from Brentwood (DB from BD)

Staff Rivalries

More of Doug's personal memories from the Sixties.

When I first went to work for Eastern National on 3 April 1962 at Brentwood garage I had to go for a week's route learning. I was given a sheet of paper with times of buses I had to go on for the week. The 260, 261 and 262 from North Road and the 30A from the High Street and others which started from the depot. Every EN driver or conductor had to go with an ex-City crew never with an EN crew. It soon became clear that there was a 'them and us' situation, 'us' being the old City guard and 'them' being EN. At that time all office staff, Inspectors and Fitters were all ex-City and as EN we were outnumbered. We had a hard time, City men ignored EN in the canteen and likewise office staff took food and drink back to the office to consume. The City guard always wore hats and ties and if the Superintendent spoke to them off would come the cap and he was called "sir". Us EN boys were having none of that, to us them days were over and Super was no better than the rest of us. Gradually EN took over the union, then the strikes started. An EN conductor would be sacked for an uncollected fare while a City conductor would get a warning. I wanted to get on the Private Hires but there was no way I was going to get on that as each one had a City driver and I had to leave to do so. I had six years with EN but 18 years as a coach driver elsewhere.

Allan White from Hoddesdon

More on WNO 479

I was going through some old paperwork during the summer and I came across a newspaper article.

[Editor's note: unfortunately, due to copyright, we are not able to reproduce newspaper articles. Allan's cutting shows the Hoddesdon Town players celebrating on top of Eastern National open-top Bristol KSW 2383, WNO 479. They had won the triple of Spartan League Championship Cup, The Herts Charity Shield and the Spartan League Challenge Cup.]

I had to do some research as I didn't know a lot about Hoddesdon Town FC, but looking back at their record of success I'm pretty certain that the year when the photo was taken would have been 1971. I wasn't living in Hoddesdon at that time but in Cheshunt so this would probably have come from the local newspaper the 'Hertfordshire Mercury'. Quite a coincidence that I should come across this at this time having just read about this batch of buses in the recent Essex Bus Magazine (688).

Route 347C & An Early Dennis Dart for Essex

The 'RF70 & Friends' event was held at the Epping & Ongar Railway on 5 September 2021, based at North Weald. One of the 'friends' was this preserved Carlyle bodied Dennis Dart, G39 TGV, which was new to London Buses as DT39 in July 1990. It is seen at Blackmore on route 347C, a route and number used just for the day, not a real historical service. **Chris Stewart**



What might have been for Essex.

A year before DT39 was new, both Southend Transport and Eastern National had examined a Dennis Dart with this style of bodywork. On 26 July 1989 the unregistered prototype Duple bodied Dart was at Southend Transport and the next day with Eastern National. This bus was illustrated on the front cover of EBN 306, October 1990. EBN 310, February 1990, then reported "The Dennis Dart with Duple B39F body was finally received [by Southend Transport] from Dennis in January for evaluation: registered G541 JBV, it was used from January 16 to 22 and was allocated fleet number 401. In a red and white livery, it was used on a variety of routes, including 1A, 9A, 18 and 24. It is not clear if this is the same vehicle which was examined last July while it was unregistered (although it was in the same livery)." This was followed up in EBNs 312/3, April / May 1990: "G541 JBV arrived [with Eastern National] on 12 April 1990 and was used in service from Chelmsford depot, being seen on the 41A and 44C on Easter Sunday."

As it turned out, the by then split Eastern National & Thamesway did not purchase any Darts until two years later, when the latter bought 901-917 (K901-917 CVW) for London Regional Transport service 214 in July & August 1992, but these were with the newer Plaxton (originally Reeve Burgess) Pointer bodywork. The first one purchased by the companies for service in Essex was even later, 801 (L801 MEV), also a Plaxton Pointer, for Eastern National in October 1993. As for Southend Transport, it is doubtful if the cash strapped council-owned company of the early 1990s could afford to buy new Darts, and anyway, for part of that time, their focus was on crew-operation of Routemasters in competition with Thamesway minibuses. They did eventually buy Darts in April 1997 when under British Bus ownership, and this time they were ahead of the game with early low floor models, Plaxton Pointer bodied DSL 56-67, P256-67 FPK, (although the DSL code was nominal, not used by Southend) - these became 3386-97 in December 1998 under Arriva. Second-hand step-entrance Darts eventually joined the fleet from 2000 onwards, over a decade after one was first examined, but none to the bodywork design of the prototype.

And so, although the Dart ended up becoming a major part of the Essex Bus scene over the last 30 years, and still is today in areas like Chelmsford, the bodywork design carried by DT39 did not.



Above: G541 JBV on loan to Southend Transport on route 24 at Leigh Church on 21 January 1990. **Richard Delahoy**

Below: In the photo on the opposite page, RF392 (MXX 280) is following DT39 on route 347C. Here is a photo of it, same location, and with full blinds. **Chris Stewart**



Essex Preservation in the North East

by Richard Delahoy

The recent Omnibus Society Presidential Weekend at the end of September based at Newcastle and hosted by Go North East Managing Director Martijn Gilbert, revealed three preservation projects with Essex connections.



At Go North East's new Riverside depot in Gateshead, on display and used for tours of the massive depot site, was the former Eastern National Leyland Olympian coach B693 BPU, 4505. Originally used on the Southend to London Kings Cross route 400, 4505 was sold to Liverbus for service in Liverpool. It ended its service life with Panther Travel and was saved for preservation by Adam Kelleher and Wayne Bell. Now owned by Martijn and restored in Northumbria livery, she recalls sister coach 4509 which ran for Northumbria as 368, hence she carries fictitious fleet number 369.

Behind is ex Northern General Routemaster 2099, PCN 762, owned by the North East Bus Preservation Trust and on loan to Go North East (and to the left, one of the charging points for the 'Voltra' electric buses).



Moving on to J H Coaches at Birtley, we found W905 UJM, the former Network Colchester 905. A Volvo B10BLE / Alexander, it was new in 2000 to TGM for use on the 726 Croydon to Heathrow service, moving to Colchester in September 2006. Withdrawn in October 2012, it passed to Classic Coaches of Annfield Plain. After their closure in October 2015, it went to J H Coaches, managed by ex-TGM Group manager Ian Shipley and his son, John. It is understood to be about to enter preservation; it was no longer in service with J H Coaches at the time of our visit.



Finally, less recognisable as an ex-Colchester bus, this Bristol RELL under restoration by the Tyneside Heritage Vehicles group is OWC 720M, new as Colchester Borough Transport 20 in 1973, one of 15 in that fleet. In the early years of deregulation, the Newcastle Busways company acquired many second-hand REs (and Leopards) for its Blue Bus Services low-cost unit, OWC 720M being 1812 in that fleet, running from 1989 to 1997. The bus was then acquired for preservation and has passed through various owners, now undergoing a thorough restoration, including use of parts from donor bus OEF 74K, ex Hartlepool.

The Decline of the 103 (and rise of the 104)

by Robert Appleton

With the revisions to First Essex services 103/104 from 1 September 2021, this is an appropriate time to recount the history of these routes since 30 April 1972. All photos by **the author**.

Prior to 30 April 1972, route 70 ran from Harwich to Bishop's Stortford, but had earlier been split into two sections, Harwich-Colchester and Colchester-Bishop's Stortford, with through passengers having to change buses at Colchester Bus Station. On 30 April 1972 the two sections were completely separated with the Colchester-Bishop's Stortford section retaining the 70 number and the Harwich-Colchester section being renumbered 103. This was a logical number to use as there was already a 104 in the Harwich area, which shared the route Harwich-Dovercourt-Ramsey with service 70. In Ramsey, service 104 turned left, following the old A120 road to Wix. At Wix (Cross) a sharp left turn, and 104 continued for another 1.5 miles to terminate at the small village of Stones Green. At the same time as the introduction of the 103 number the 104 timetable was revised. At Wix (Cross) a few journeys turned right and went to Bradfield (Village Maid), where 104 joined 103 to continue to Colchester via Mistley, Manningtree, Lawford and Ardleigh. The two routes have been linked ever since and are basically the same today, although some amendments have been made over the years which are outlined throughout this article.

The 30 April 1972 changes were part of a wider revision of bus services in the Manningtree area. The joint Eastern Counties / Eastern National service 123 Clacton-Ipswich was revised to operate Clacton-Manningtree Station every two hours, operated by Eastern National. Eastern Counties service 221 between Mistley and Colchester was withdrawn, replaced by Eastern National 103/104. Eastern Counties services 209/221 were revised to operate Ipswich-Mistley, with each service every two hours to give an hourly frequency Ipswich-Mistley.

The Harwich-Colchester 70 had had an irregular off-peak frequency on weekdays, for example departures from Colchester at 0945, 1115, 1255, 1500, 1605. From 30 April 1972 services 103/104 had a regular hourly off-peak service, with departures from Harwich at xx45 and from Colchester at xx05, with a 70-minute journey time.

These changes meant that passengers could easily change buses in Manningtree between xx25 and xx40. For example, travelling from Ardleigh or Lawford to Ipswich: catch 1005 Colchester-Harwich 103, alight at Manningtree (Skinners Arms) at 1035, cross the road to board at 1040, the 1035 Mistley-Ipswich 221.

Most journeys were 103, only 0945, 1145, 1545 ex Harwich and 1305 ex Colchester were 104, to give morning shopping in Colchester, and afternoon shopping in Dovercourt. By June 1975 the Harwich terminus had moved from the Quay to the bus station, which was two bus stands and an enquiry office at the depot. By April 1979 service 104 was revised to operate via Little Oakley and Great Oakley between Dovercourt and Wix.

Above right: Bristol FLF6G/ECW 2754 (JWC 714) allocated to DT (Harwich) in Tilling green and cream livery, in Harwich Road, Mistley working a Colchester to Harwich 70 journey on a Saturday afternoon in February 1970.

Right: what ended up being the last FLF allocated to Harwich, 2842 (MVX 879C) had been an FLF6B, but was re-engined to FLF6G in 1977. Seen in August 1978 in NBC green and white livery at the bus stop opposite Rigby Avenue, Mistley, working Colchester to Harwich 103.



Service 70 Harwich-Colchester had been worked by Bristol FLF / ECW Lodekkas from Harwich depot, but from 30 April 1972 some workings on 103/104 were by one-man operated Bristol MW5G / ECW saloons. From the same date, Colchester depot gained some peak hour workings on service 103 between Bradfield, Mistley and Colchester, using Bristol MW5G / ECW and Bristol RELL6G / ECW.

Later Harwich received their own Bristol RELL6G / ECWs and Leyland Nationals. Crew operation gradually reduced, and the last FLF at Harwich, 2842 (MXV 879C), transferred to Clacton in June 1980. Heavy peak hour loadings on service 103 with schoolchildren and students travelling to & from Colchester meant there was still a need for double-deckers. By March 1982 three Bristol VRT / ECW were allocated to Harwich, consisting of series one 3000 (CPU 979G), series two 3027 (NPU 974M) and series three 3061 (LJN 656P). In February 1986 Harwich received two brand-new Leyland Olympian / ECW with dual purpose seating, 4007/8 (C407/8 HJN).

Deregulation came early, with Chartercoach, t/a Coastal Red, starting service 10 Harwich-Colchester on 1 September 1986. Eastern National responded with additional Colchester-Mistley journeys, lower fares, and extensive publicity. Right: Coastal Red JCL 813V, a Leyland Leopard / Willowbrook new to Eastern Counties in 1979, acquired by Coastal Red from Ambassador Travel in 1986. In Colchester Road, Lawford, on 6 October 1986, working service 10 Colchester-Harwich, passing Eastern National 1718 (NEV 675M), allocated to Colchester, heading to its home town.



From Deregulation Day, 26 October 1986, Coastal Red gained the Essex County Council contracts for Harwich-Colchester weekday evening services on 104 and Sunday service 102. The 102 was similar to the 104 but also served Parkeston and Dedham. This lasted until 1 November 1987 when Eastern National gained these journeys following retendering. Much later, on 9 October 2016, the evening 104 journeys were revised to become 102, also operating via Parkeston and Dedham.

Meanwhile, on 11 May 1987, the commercial daytime services 103/104 were revised, to operate hourly on each route to give a combined half hourly off-peak frequency between Harwich and Colchester. Route 103 also diverted to serve the Long Meadows Estate in Dovercourt. The half hourly frequency settled down into this pattern:

xx50 Harwich - Colchester xx00 104, xx05 Colchester - Harwich xx10 103,
xx20 Harwich - Colchester xx25 103, xx30 Colchester - Harwich xx40 104.

This frequency required five buses, four from Harwich depot and one from Colchester depot. Leyland Olympians were mainly used, plus Bristol VRTs and Leyland Nationals.

Coastal Red was taken over by Eastern National on 28 February 1988. Fortunately, despite the end of competition, there was no change to the 103/104 timetables, the half hourly off-peak frequency endured for many years. From 5 June 2006, alterations to Colchester Bus Station, including closure of the East Hill entrance / exit, meant a new routing for 103/104 buses leaving Colchester, via Queen Street, Magdalen Street, Hythe and St Andrews Avenue.

From 4 May 2008, a revised timetable gave extra running time to improve reliability, requiring six buses. By this time Harwich had taken over the off-peak Colchester duty, so Harwich had six Volvo Olympian / Alexander, ex First Leicester, and one Leyland Olympian / Alexander, ex First Glasgow, to cover six duties. Right: DT34285 (P185 TGD) Volvo Olympian / Alexander in Harwich Road, Mistley on 27 August 2005. 4326 / 34285 was new to Strathclyde in 1996 and was acquired from First Leicester in 2003.



Wheelchair accessible low floor double-deckers came to Harwich, for services 103/104, in 2010, seven ex First London full-height Dennis Trident / Plaxton Presidents converted to single-door. However, these were transferred away when Harwich became an outstation

of Colchester on 1 December 2013, because the Tridents were too high for Queen Street depot in Colchester. They were replaced by Scania / Wrightbus saloons and one or two low-height Volvo B7TL / Transbus ALX400s, after complaints about overcrowding on peak hour journeys to Colchester on the single-deckers.

Harwich outstation closed on 28 June 2014. Colchester depot took over 103/104, with a revised route for journeys leaving Stanwell Street (part of Colchester Bus Station), the new route being via Osborne Street, St John's Street, Head Street and High Street.

From 1 September 2019, services 103/104 had a revised timetable with the off-peak service thinned out, gaps between departures varied from 35 mins to 55 mins. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, there were frequent revisions to the 103/104 timetables from 5 April 2020 onwards, too many to detail here, but they were covered in EBN at the time. A more stable timetable has operated since 8 March 2021, but the off-peak frequency was still very irregular.

From 1 September 2021, services 103/104 were revised again, with an hourly off-peak frequency, at xx00 from Harwich and xx30 from Colchester. Back on 30 April 1972 nearly all journeys were 103, operating via Ramsey, Wrabness (Crossroads), and Bradfield (Church), with only four journeys on 104 (see above). Now nearly all journeys are 104, operating via Little Oakley, Great Oakley and Wix. On Mondays to Fridays, the only 103 journeys are 0715 ex Harwich to Colchester, 0920 ex Mistley to Colchester, 1530 & 1825 ex Colchester to Harwich. On Saturdays the only 103 journeys are 0800 & 1700 ex Harwich to Colchester, 0930 & 1530 ex Colchester to Harwich. Although the main daytime service is now only half of what it was just over two years ago, we must now hope for a period of stability on services 103/104. Right: Enviro 300 67735 (SN62 AHL) turning from Hall Lane onto Low Road in Dovercourt on 13 August 2021, working 1150 Harwich-Colchester 103 on a section of the route which is separate to service 104.



Demographic changes have probably contributed to the decision to run most services as 104. Little Oakley, Great Oakley and Wix have seen a lot of new housebuilding in recent years, which is not the case in Ramsey or Bradfield. Wrabness is served by Greater Anglia trains on the Harwich Town to Manningtree line, with an hourly off-peak frequency, with onward connections to Colchester, etc. An alternative to walking to Wrabness (Crossroads) to catch service 103.

For the Long Meadows Estate in Dovercourt, some residents are within walking distance of the main road in Upper Dovercourt to catch service 104. Others can use Panther Travel service 2, Harwich-Parkeston Circular, to reach Dovercourt High Street and change onto service 104 there. Service 2 has an hourly frequency for most of the day in between school times. It arrives at Dovercourt High Street at xx54, and service 104 departs for Colchester at xx04. At school times, Panther Travel services 18/118 link Ramsey with Parkeston, Harwich and Dovercourt. Right: Panther Travel DC56 PAN (ex RX56 BWE) ADL Mini Pointer Dart in Dovercourt High Street on 25 November 2019, heading back to Harwich on service 2 Harwich - Parkeston Circular.



For other parts of the Long Meadows Estate in Dovercourt, Ramsey and Wrabness, Harwich Connexions provide a Dial-A-Ride Community Transport service with minibuses, including a Hospital Hopper service to Colchester. For the eastern part of Bradfield village, only served by 103, residents can use the Tendring Community Transport Dial-A-Ride service.

A more detailed history of the operations and buses at Harwich depot from September 1965 to November 2013 are in the series of articles "Eastern National at Harwich" published in EBNs 610/612/613/614/616-624 between February 2015 and April 2016.

Acknowledgements:

Essex Bus News magazines and Eastern National/Thamesway/Essex Buses Fleet Records (Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group); Coastal Red Fact File 4 (Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group); Eastern National timetable books; First Essex Buses timetables; Panther Travel timetables; Harwich Connexions website: www.harwichconnexions.co.uk; Tendring Community Transport website: www.tendringcdc.gov.uk.

Photo Gallery of Routes 103 & 104

All photos by **Robert Appleton**. Opposite, top to bottom, left to right:

DT1521 (HTW 179H) Bristol RELL6G / ECW, in NBC green and white, on layover outside Harwich depot in April 1976, with the destination blind already set for another journey on service 103 to Colchester.

DT4007 (C407 HJN) Leyland Olympian / ECW with semi-coach seats, leaving Colchester Bus Station on 8 March 1986, working 1505 103 to Harwich. 4007 was only a few weeks old at the date of this photo. It was numerically the first vehicle in the dual purpose version of the recently introduced Eastern National privatisation livery, although the ECW shade of green was slightly darker than EN's and the fleet name is sloping in the wrong direction.

DT1920 (JHJ 146V) Leyland National new in 1979. Freshly repainted in the bus version of EN privatisation livery, outside Harwich depot on 4 October 1986, ready to enter the competitive battle with Coastal Red.

CR3232 (JWT 760V) Bristol VRT / ECW new to West Yorkshire Road Car in 1980, acquired from Rider York in March 1995. In the follow-up Badgerline style livery, introduced in 1993, working the Colchester depot duty on 103/104 on 2 October 1995. On 1440 Colchester - Harwich 104, waiting to collect schoolchildren outside Manningtree High School in Colchester Road, Lawford.

DT1513 (P513 MNO) Dennis Lance / Northern Counties Paladin at Colchester bus station on 27 December 1997, waiting to work back to Harwich on service 103. In the same livery as 3232 but after the creation of First Bus, so with First style fleet names and logo and no badger or 'E' symbol.

DT4314 (L314 PWR) in Upper Dovercourt on 4 January 1999. Volvo Olympian / Northern Counties Palatine I new in 1994, acquired from First Calderline in 1998. In the same livery as 1513, but now the First fleet name has taken prominence and 'Eastern National' is relegated to small letters above the wheel arch.

DT32804 (T804 LLC) Dennis Trident / Plaxton President in Harwich Road, Mistley on 20 April 2010. New to First London in 1999, acquired from First Eastern Counties in 2010. In Barbie livery.

Three days before Harwich outstation closed, 65570 (S570 TPW) in Manningtree on 25 June 2014, working 1005 Colchester-Harwich 103. A Scania L94UB / Wright Access Foline new to First Eastern Counties in 1999, acquired from First Northampton in 2013. Also in Barbie livery.

Below: Another Dennis Lance / Northern Counties Paladin, but this time a second-hand one with DP seating. DT60102 (P868 MBF) was new to First PMT in February 1997 and acquired by First Essex in October 2004. In Harwich Road, Mistley on 3 March 2008.



Rear Cover Photo Captions

In EBM 687 it was reported that Bedford Super Vega 675 OCV was acquired by Lodge's from Lewis Coaches of Henstridge, Somerset in 2020 and had been repainted into Lodges' livery. It is seen on Blue Anchor seafront in Somerset during the 2019 Quantock Motors running day from Minehead, top right, **David Grimmett** and at this year's Lodge's open day on 22 August, bottom right. **Richard Delahoy**





ESSEX BUS MAGAZINE Issue 690 October 2021

Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964