

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 722 June 2024



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



fb.me/essexbus

722 for EBM 722



Above: A rare vehicle with a very short life with Essex Buses. 722 was one of just five Dennis / Plaxton 11.3m Super Pointer Darts for the company, 722-726 (R722-6 HHK), B41F, new in June 1998 but sold only 10 months later (to First Huddersfield). They were branded for 'Centurion Route 65' in Colchester. In April 1999 they were replaced on this route by Scania L94UB / Wrightbus Axxess Fjolines 650-654 (T650-4 SSF). A photo of 650 with this branding is on page 24. 722 is seen entering Colchester bus station on 14 August 1998. **Robert Appleton** 722 for EBM 722 Extra is on pages 6-7.

Visitors to Walton-on-the-Naze

A photo feature on coaches visiting Walton in summer 2022 is on pages 29-32. Here is Corbel of London Ltd Scania K360EB6 / Irizar i4 YN70 YSB leading similar YN70 YSA plus a third, with Kelly's of Essex Mercedes Tourismo GL14 PUL in the background, at Bath House Meadow Coach Park, Walton on 21 June 2022. **Alan Moore**





Above: The three open top buses recently acquired by Ensignbus were all used, together with open top RM371, on routes 68 & 99 on Saturday 25 May 2024. 'Queen Mary' Leyland Titan PD3 / NCME BUF 426C is at Western Esplanade, near the Genting Casino where the 99 does a U turn. The bus is empty because most passengers had alighted at the Pier on the south side of the road upon arrival from Shoeburyness. The bus is then to pick up at the Pier stop on the north side of the road. **Richard Delahoy**
Other photos are on the inside rear and the rear covers.

Front Cover: First Bus have introduced a new corporate livery, full details on page 11. Enviro 400 MMC 33987 (SN65 OGC) was the first First Essex bus to receive this, although it is still awaiting fleet names and other decals. It is seen on its first full day of service after repainting, on route 25 at Southend Travel Centre on 17 May 2024. **Matthew Evans**
This turned out to be quite a rare photo of this bus in this livery with orange destination blinds as two days later the blinds were changed to white ones.

Right: The cover of the programme from the first Southend Bus Rally (then the 'South Essex Vintage Bus Rally') 50 years ago this month. A couple of photos taken at the rally are on page 4.



Group Information

Chair & Meetings
Secretary
Treasurer & Membership
Distribution, Publication & Sales
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, Ensignbus, 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 to Adam Kelleher,
address above)

Hedingham & Chambers

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

Service Revisions, Panther Travel, Lodge Coaches and Publicity

Ian Ransom, ianransom2008@googlemail.com
34 Donald Way, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9JE

Stephensons & NIBS

Richard Delahoy, address opposite

Smaller Operators

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

Ipswich Buses in Essex

Robert Appleton, rcappleton29@gmail.com

Vectare

Chris Stewart, shenfield252@gmail.com

Subscriptions

The calendar year subscription for 2024 is £27 for
printed copies sent by post, or £19 for electronic pdf
copies sent by e-mail. New members may join from
any month, but subscriptions will always run to
December from whichever month the member
chooses, please ask for the relevant price.
Please contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road,
Southend-on-Sea, SS1 3TT
richard.delahoy@blueyonder.co.uk

EBM Extra

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

Membership Records & Data Protection

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

Reports, Articles & Photographs

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

Target Dates for EBM 723

Reports to Sub-Editors **22 June**

Sub-Editor drafts to Editor **28 June**

Dispatch by Printers on or before **6 July**

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent
up to 29th and will be included if possible, if not it will
be held over to the next month.

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

© Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group 2024

www.essexbus.org.uk

fb.me/essexbus

Printed by

Directcds Ltd, Unit 9c Britannia Estates, Leagrave Road,
Luton LU3 1RJ
01582 702703

www.directcds.co.uk

Group Notices

Group Meetings

For 2024, meetings have moved to **Saturday afternoons**. These are being held at **The Quaker Meeting House**, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2QL which is a five-ten minute walk from Chelmsford Bus & Railway Stations. Doors open at 1400 for a 1430 start, ending at 1630. There is very limited on-site parking, accessed via Cedar Avenue West, we would ask that you leave these for those less able to walk.

8 June	Part 1: Ian Barlex - Lost independents in Scotland and Wales during the past ten years (remix). At the May meeting, Ian covered English and Scottish operators, but time ran out so he didn't have time to cover Wales, plus the second half of Scotland was a bit rushed. This presentation will therefore cover Wales and a more relaxed repeat of the second half of Scotland, plus additional Scottish photos, including some other ceased operators not included in May.
14 September	Part 2: Ian Ransom - Buses through the ages.
12 October	Alan Osborne - topic to be advised.
9 November	Tony Francis - Reflections of LT Country Area and LCBS.
14 December	Robert Appleton - North Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside.
	Richard Delahoy - 20 years ago.

Please note there are no meetings in July or August.

Meetings are being held jointly with our good friends at The Omnibus Society, Eastern & Southern Branch, who are very generously paying for the room hire so entrance is FREE.

Group Visits

Canvey Island Transport Museum 30 June

We regret that owing to insufficient bookings, the visit as originally planned has been cancelled. Places are available for a social visit, meeting at Canvey Museum at 1130. Please contact Ian Ransom (ianransom2008@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending.

The Running Card

Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Saturday 15 June: Transport & Model Festival. Ipswich Transport Museum, Cobham Road, Ipswich IP3 9JD.

Sunday 23 June: Norfolk Classic Bus & Coach Show. Thursford Steam Museum, Thursford Green NR21 OPS.

Saturday 6-Sunday 7 July: Vintage Transport Weekend, North Norfolk Railway, Holt.

Sunday 7 July: Eastbourne Classic Bus Running Day based at the Railway Station. NOTE DATE CHANGE.

Saturday 13-Sunday 14 July: British Bus Fleets East Anglia, East Anglian Transport Museum, Carlton Colville.

Saturday 20-Sunday 21 July: Routemaster 70th Anniversary event at the former Chiswick Works.

Sunday 21 July: Alton Bus Rally and Running Day. New venue at Alton College, Old Odiam Road.

Sunday 28 July: Classic buses in Windsor.

Sunday 28 July: Worthing Seafront Gathering.

Sunday 4 August: Gosport Bus Rally, Stokes Bay.

Sunday 11 August: Big Bus Show, Stonham Barns IP14 6AT. Free bus service from Stowmarket Station.

Monday 26 August: Bus theme at Ipswich Transport Museum to celebrate 60 years of ADX 63B.

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

50th Anniversary of the Southend Bus Rally



The first occurrence of what was to become the annual Southend Bus Rally, organised by the Eastern National Preservation Group, was held 50 years ago this month, on 23 June 1974. It used the field close to the road in Lifstan Way, rather than the larger area further back as in subsequent years. It also featured a road run. It became hugely successful over the years, but sadly the 2007 rally proved to be the last. Here are a couple of photos from the inaugural rally. Both **Richard Delahoy**. Photos from other years are on the opposite page and inside rear cover.

Above: Guy Arab IV / Roe KCF 711, new in January 1957, had just been acquired by the ENPG from H.C. Chambers & Son of Bures. For many years it was kept in the bus museum at Canvey Island. Happily it remains in preservation and is now part of the Newman Family collection. A photo of this bus in service at Colchester was in EBM 711.

Below: RF10 (LUC 210) was one of the 25 private hire coaches delivered to London Transport in 1951. It was sold (via dealer PVS) to Osborne's of Tollesbury in 1964 and ran for them until the end of 1969, when it was sold for preservation as seen here. It used to be rallied but hasn't been seen on the road for quite a few years now.



Follow Ups



Above: Further to the two photos of Bender School of Motoring of Laindon vehicles in EBM 721, here is another of their buses, ex Bristol Omnibus Company Bristol FLF / ECW CHY 418C (which was acquired in 1984) at the Southend Bus Rally on 2 June 1985. Behind is Eastern National Bristol KSW / ECW open top 2383 (WNO 479), followed by Eastern National Leyland Olympian / ECW 4004 (B699 BPU), which had been new in April 1985, and former Southend Transport Leyland Titan PD3/6 / Massey 341 (CIN 441C). The FLF was scrapped in 1990.

Nick Street

Driving Buses in the Snow

In EBM 720, Richard Delahoy wrote about a day's driving on a rail replacement service in the snow back in 1987. The day ended with him handing over his Southend Transport Fleetline to fellow driver Ian Dann, also an EBEG member. Richard asked if Ian remembered that day. Well, Ian has written to say no, he didn't remember, but it did jog a memory of another day driving in the snow, as he explains: "I was transported by the article to driving around Grays in heavy snow in a Harris Leyland Swift, so that must have been after 1988. It was either the fact that I left the yard before snow had been really compacted, or it was the design of the vehicle, or the skill of the driver (these are listed in order of likelihood) but I was one of few buses that made it out. And due to the Webasto heaters, it was very snug and warm. But I don't remember doing that rail replacement, sorry. Great article though, brought back lots of memories".

Corrections / Additions to EBM 721

Deaths: Peter Godward also traded for a while as 'Tours R Us'.

In the photo caption of Ensignbus's ex-Eastern National Bristol MW / ECW coach 7017 HK on page 9, the fleet number was given as 458. This is correct in that this was its original number when new in 1958, but the coach is actually carrying its number from the August 1964 renumbering, 331.

In the caption to the top photo on page 19, the route is X20 not X30.

First Essex: It was not specifically stated that 33725 (SN12 AKX) is an Alexander Dennis E40D / Enviro 400.

Other Operators: Terry's Cars, Witham, partial correction: Vauxhall Vivaro M8 TE12 BUS is still owned, but is now a non-PCV (PHV).

722 for EBM 722 Extra: Commuter Connections

These three pictures depict vehicles on service 722 at Aldgate in the City of London, all with an Essex connection.

Below: London Transport D69 (GYE 58), a Brush bodied Daimler CWA6, was used on the Romford Road Green Line services out of Aldgate to Brentwood (721) and Upminster & Corbets Tey (722) between the end of 1948 and August 1950, when it was replaced by new RT buses. It was sold by LT in 1953 to Belfast City Transport, who had it rebodied by Harkness and they ran it until 1970. Southend Corporation Transport similarly acquired 13 ex-London Transport D class Daimlers and had them rebodied by Massey. D69 is waiting to depart from Aldgate to Corbets Tey. Behind is a TF class coach on the 723 to Grays & Tilbury and a trolleybus. The 722 ran via Romford, Hornchurch and Upminster and, for a year from November 1963, on to Dartford via the newly opened Tunnel. In 1965 it was reduced to peak hours only and withdrawn completely in August 1968. **Richard Delahoy collection**

Opposite Top: Also loading in Aldgate on a 722, many years later, on 12 September 1983, is Eastern National 1216 (BNO 702T), a Bedford YMT with Duple Dominant II body. Allocated to Basildon, this 722 was a joint EN / London Country commuter service that ran from Corringham to London, and commenced in the month the photo was taken. EN withdrew from it in August 1988 (after a brief period when it was extended to Basildon) and London Country ceased operation in June 1991. **Richard Delahoy**

Opposite Bottom: A third service 722 to serve Aldgate was the Arriva Southend / Essex Buses (Thamesway) joint service from Southend and Canvey to London that replaced the previous competing services from each operator. 722 was the number allocated to the fast peak-only trips that replaced the Arriva X10 and Thamesway City Saver S4. Here Arriva 4311 (A141 EPA), a former Green Line Leyland Tiger / Plaxton Paramount 3200, pulls into the stop in Mansell Street on 11 October 1999 with a Thamesway City Saver liveried Volvo B10M-62 / Plaxton Premiere behind on the 721. By now eastbound coaches called at Mansell Street rather than in Aldgate Bus Station due to congestion problems. **Richard Delahoy**





Welcome to Essex

Andrew Colebourne

About half a mile of TfL route 275 (Walthamstow - Barkingside), operated by Stagecoach London, from just west of Clarence Gate, Manor Road to the Stradbroke Park eastbound stop, Tomswood Hill, is in the county of Essex. TfL did not realise this until last year. When they did, they arranged for Stagecoach to register the service with the East of England Traffic Commissioner.

The registration in N&P 2575 15/03/2023 was as follows:
PK0001938/19
EAST LONDON BUS & COACH CO
LTD, STEPHENSON STREET, CANNING
TOWN, LONDON, E16 4SA

From: Cross Road stop Manor Road, Chigwell to: Stradbroke Park stop Tomswood Road, Chigwell Via: Name or No.: 275 Service type: Normal Stopping Effective date: 25 February 2023. Other details: Daily Monday to Saturday every 12 minutes, Sunday & Bank Holidays every 20 minutes.

This contains a minor error in referring to Tomswood Road rather than Tomswood Hill. The 'Road' meets the 'Hill' at the Stradbroke Park junction. The Essex boundary sign and the bus stop are beyond the junction. If 'Open Streetmap' is correct they are almost exactly on the boundary, there is a London Borough of Redbridge sign a little further south.

At the Clarence Gate end (which was the entrance to Claybury Hospital, now Repton Park) there are no boundary signs. Oddly, there seems to be a kink in the boundary here so the junction is in Essex but the old hospital site is in London, so all the buses that used to go to Claybury Hospital actually trespassed into Essex at this point!

Stagecoach London Enviro 400s 19848 (LX12 CZB, diesel) **above right** leaving and 12150 (LX61 DCV, hybrid) **below** entering Essex on route 275 at Tomswood Hill, Chigwell on 9 May 2024. Both **Andrew Colebourne**



2 June 2024

The following is all additional information / clarification to what was published in EBM 721.

21/A/S (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Canvey Newlands **First Essex**. Extension to & from Great Wakering, Landwick Cottages as per EBM 721. Additionally, when M-S route 21A was introduced on 15 April this year, replacing short 21 journeys to & from Hadleigh Morrisons, most journeys were cut back to & from Leigh-on-Sea Sutherland Boulevard. Now re-extended to Hadleigh, The Memorial (one M-F afternoon journey continues to Canvey, two M-F morning journeys start from Canvey).

22/A (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Waltham Abbey, Shernbrooke Road **Vectare**. Renumbered 16. The short journeys previously numbered 22A have been withdrawn so there is no 16A variant.

37 (Daily) Warley, Eagle Way - Pilgrims Hatch **First Essex**. Minor timetable changes on M-F only.

86 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - West Mersea, High Street **First Essex**. No change to Sunday timetable or route.

X10 (Daily) Basildon Bus Station - Stansted Airport Bus Station **First Essex**. In Basildon rerouted direct from the Bus Station to Eastmayne, via Broadmayne, serving Watmill bus stop. Some journeys will extend beyond Basildon Bus Station to Festival Leisure Park and Janus House at peak times. In Chelmsford rerouted between the bus station and Broomfield Hospital, via Chelmer Valley Road and Valley Bridge, with stops at Skerry Rise and The Angel and will also serve Ash Tree Corner. In addition Chelmsford, Army and Navy roundabout, will also be served.

X30 (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Stansted Airport Bus Station **First Essex**. In Chelmsford rerouted between the bus station and Broomfield Hospital, via Chelmer Valley Road and Valley Bridge, with stops at Skerry Rise and The Angel. In addition Chelmsford, Army and Navy roundabout, will also be served, as will Rawreth, Bedloes Corner. The frequency increase on Mon-Sat from every 60 minutes to every half-hour applies to the whole route from Southend to Stansted but with two different calling patterns: one bus an hour via Southend Airport but not serving Broomfield Hospital or Dunmow, and one an hour via Southend Hospital and serving both Broomfield Hospital and Dunmow (and taking around 8/9 minutes longer as a result). On Sundays and in the evenings, the overall frequency drops to hourly, with each stopping pattern served once every two hours.

The changes notified by **Central Connect** and **Vectare** to ECC to services 18/C, 420/A (renumbered 20/22/22/22B), 28 and 418B, have been deferred, to Sunday 28 July.

Ensignbus part of First Bus

Adam Kelleher

Vehicle News / Repaint

Volvo B7Ls 370 & 371 took part in the Ipswich Town FC parade on 6 May 2024 following their promotion to the Premier League. They both received all-over blue and white wraps. Unfortunately, we don't have any photos, if anyone does could they please submit them to the editor, E Mail address on page 2, and we will include next month.

Following this, 370 then went to Mardens for repaint, still to red, but with the new grey instead of silver, and black instead of red wheels. The Volvo badge beneath the windscreen remains, but the Ayats badge below that has been removed and replaced with an Ensignbus fleet name, 'Ensign' in black and 'Bus' in black outline on the grey.

Over the Bank Holiday weekend of 24th-27th, B7L 369 attended Birmingham Pride in a suitable wrap. It was reported that after their work with Ipswich Town, 370 & 371 went to Leeds and received wraps for Leeds United gaining promotion to the Premier League in the Championship Play-Off Final. However, Leeds lost to Southampton and so these were not used. Because the B7Ls were all in use elsewhere, red & cream 99 branded Volvo B9TL 364 was used on route 68 during half term week (this was the first time that a 99 'Rossi' bus actually served the main Rossi Cafe on the seafront, which is only served by the 68 and not the 99) alongside Enviro 500 368.

Heritage vehicles were used on routes 68 & 99 on Saturday 25 May: open top RM371 plus the three recently acquired open toppers (as reported in EBMs 720/1). Photos on page 1, inside rear cover and rear cover.

With thanks to John Lidstone.

Harlow

Optare Solo 2482 (YJ07 VRF), which moved from Harlow to Ware last July, has now been disposed of (April 2024).

There was a much improved performance during May with less buses off road. Further to last month, 1467, 4184 and 4239 have all returned to service. The 724s DAFs continue to be much more reliable than when they were first acquired.

The Bus Station office / toilet block has now been demolished. From 1930 on Saturday 25 May to 0500 on Tuesday 28th (a Bank Holiday weekend) Harlow Bus Station was closed with buses using three temporary stops located on South Gate, off Velizy Avenue. Heavy equipment was in place to demolish the footbridge from Terminus House which crosses the Bus Station.

Colchester & Southend

VDL SB200 / Wrightbus Pulsar 3761 (YJ08 DZM) and Pulsar 2 3779 (KX09 KDU) were on loan from Southend to Colchester in the last week of May, half-term week when the Southend PVR is lower without schools work. 3761 returned on 1 June.

Further to last month, it now appears that Southend's Enviro 400 MMC 6502 (SN66 WHV) was a transfer to Ware, rather than just a loan.

With thanks to John Card, Adam Kelleher, Keith Sadler and LOTS.

Below: StreetLite 4224 (GN62 HMY) at Bluewater on 29 April 2024. This bus was transferred from Colchester to Maidstone in March 2022 and had previously worked at Southend. **David Moth**



Adam Kelleher

New Corporate Livery

First Bus have once again returned to a corporate livery after a decade of various colourful local liveries being introduced. They have turned the clock back to the start of the 21st Century by eliminating some local fleet names. These had returned when Urban livery was introduced in 2012.

The new livery is dark purple at the rear (a stronger shade than on previous Urban and Urban 2 liveries and covering more of the bus) with grey at the front. It was first introduced on electric buses last year and on diesel buses in April 2024, on a couple of StreetDecks in Sheffield. The first First Essex bus to receive this livery was Basildon's Enviro 400 MMC 33987, repainted at Mardens from Urban livery with gold relief, as seen on the front cover.

33987 was collected from Mardens after repaint on 16 May (and re-entered service that afternoon) and 33984 taken there in exchange to be the next to receive this livery. 33984 re-entered service in new livery on 31 May.

This new livery comes only three years after green Essex Bus livery was introduced and only two years after red shuttles livery was introduced. The change from local liveries to a corporate one is an abrupt change of policy, but we are not going to comment on the pros and cons of the reintroduction of a national livery, other than to say that, from an enthusiasts point of view, it is a shame to see the end of the green and red, and also a shame that there was never a double-decker in shuttles red livery. Airlink blue livery is to remain, and indeed, as noted in 'Acquired Vehicles' below, some recently acquired buses are being repainted into this livery.

StreetLite 63343, also a Basildon vehicle, has also received the new livery, at ADL Harlow, where it had been for RTC repairs. (It has been off road since the beginning of last November, a few parts had to be made for it.) It returned to Basildon on 22 May, also without vinyls or fleet names, and re-entered service on 24th. Two other StreetLites have now received this livery, again see 'Acquired Vehicles' below.

Acquired Vehicles

33718	SN12	AKG	SFD4DSBRFCGX36779	B452/3	H45/30F	06/12	First Games Transport
33728	SN12	ALO	SFD4DSBRFCGX36815	B452/13	H45/30F	06/12	First Games Transport
33733	SN12	AMV	SFD4DSBRFCGX36853	B452/18	H45/30F	06/12	First Games Transport

Alexander Dennis E40D / Enviro 400. Acquired from First Leicester, collected on Bank Holiday Monday 27 May 2024 and driven to Colchester. These are yet more vehicles which were part of the batch of 100 Enviro 400s purchased by First Bus as shuttles for the 2012 Olympic Games. After the Games they moved to First Manchester. They were temporarily loaned to Diamond Bus North West in 2019 after their purchase of First's Bolton depot. When they returned to First in 2020, 33728 and 33733 moved to First Leicester and received three-tone orange 'Frequent Fourteens' livery. However, when 33718 returned to First in 2020 it moved to First South Yorkshire then to First Leicester in December 2021. This probably explains why it did not get a repaint into orange and it remains in original Urban livery. 33728 and 33733 went for repainting into new corporate livery before entering service with First Essex. 33718 entered service on 30 May.

34421	SN17	MTO	SFDB38BR3HGX19776	G469/1	H45/29F	04/17	Bournemouth 200
34422	SN17	MTU	SFDB38BR3HGX19777	G469/2	H45/29F	04/17	Bournemouth 201
34423	SN17	MTV	SFDB38BR3HGX19778	G469/3	H45/29F	04/17	Bournemouth 202
34424	SN17	MTX	SFDB38BR3HGX19779	G469/4	H45/29F	05/17	Bournemouth 203
34425	SN17	MTY	SFDB38BR3HGX19788	G470/1	H45/29F	05/17	Bournemouth 204
34426	SN17	MTZ	SFDB38BR3HGX19789	G470/2	H45/29F	04/17	Bournemouth 205

Alexander Dennis E40D / Enviro 400 MMC. Acquired from First Eastern Counties. 34422 and 34424 collected from Vulcan Road depot, Norwich on 6 May 2024 and driven to Westway depot, Chelmsford. 34421 and 34423 from the same source 14 May to Colchester. 34425 and 34426 from the same source 17 May to Chelmsford.

They were acquired in 'Network Norwich' Urban 2 livery with lilac front (a new variation for First Essex), see photos on page 16, but they are being repainted into blue Airlink livery. They are for the increased service on route X30

from 2 June and to replace normal liveried double-deckers on route X20 (which have regularly been reported on in recent months). They were acquired by First Bus after Yellow Buses, Bournemouth, closed down in August 2022. This batch of six had been the last buses bought new by Yellow Buses.

34424 entered service on 13 May, 34421 & 34423 on 16th and 34425 & 34426 on 20th, all five in as acquired livery. 34422 went straight for repainting into blue Airlink livery for route X20. It entered service on 17 May on routes 86/11/S2 before going on to its designated route X20 in the late evening. 34421 then went for repaint (after being used in service for three days in acquired condition) to blue Airlink livery for route X20, back in service, on route X20, on 23rd. This was followed by 34423 which was used in Norwich livery for nine days before going for repainting on 24th and back in service on 31st. All three were repainted at Mardens.

47461	SK63 KKY	SA9DSRXXX13141369	AJ457	B37F	11/13	First Bristol
47462	SK63 KKZ	SA9DSRXXX13141370	AJ458	B37F	11/13	First Bristol
47630	SN15 ADU	SA9DSRXXX15141986	AL616	B37F	04/15	First Cymru
47633	SN15 ADZ	SA9DSRXXX15141989	AL619	B37F	04/15	First Cymru

Wrightbus StreetLite DF.

47461 and 47462 were acquired from First Glasgow, collected from Caledonia depot on 2 June 2024. They are both in Urban 2 livery with white front, similar to 47625 illustrated last month. They had moved from Bristol to Glasgow in February 2018.

47630 and 47633 were acquired from First Manchester, but collected from First Potteries Stoke depot and driven to Hadleigh depot on 21 May 2024. In yellow and black Manchester Bee Line livery. Around August 2017, both had transferred from Cymru to West Yorkshire at Leeds and later received Leeds two-tone green Urban 2 livery. Both had only moved to Manchester earlier this year when First Bus took over Rochdale depot from 24 March as part of the second Tranche of franchising in Manchester (they were part of a temporary fleet to cover for delays in new deliveries). Before entering service, they went to Mardens for repaint into the new livery, a photo of 47630 in yellow and black is on page 17. 47633 was the first vehicle to receive the full new livery with fleet names and stripes applied as seen below at Mardens on 29 May. **John G Lidstone**

Vehicles on Loan

Ensignbus StreetDecks 160 and EBS1972 were both seen at Basildon Depot on 23 May 2024. The latter had a slip board in the windscreen for route 561. It is thought they were only used for one to three days.



Interior views of 34423



34423 (SN17 MTV) at Stansted Airport on route X20 on 17 May with X20 posters already added. Note the large wheelchair area and separate buggy bay, although it is anticipated that the latter will be replaced by a luggage rack in the future.

All **David Edwards**

Allocation Changes

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

Period 2 2024/25 (28 April - 25 May)

32551 CF (oos)-Disposal, 32628 CR-CR (oos), 33411 BN-BN (oos), 33572 BN (oos)-BN, 33657 CF-CF (oos), 34421 FG-CR, 34422 FG-CR, 34423 FG-CR, 34424 FG-CF, 34425 FG-CF, 34426 FG-CF, 37027 CR-CR (oos), 44659 CF-CF (oos), 47630 FG-HH (oos), 47633 FG-HH (oos), 63343 BN (oos)-BN, 67191 BN (oos)-BN, 67194 BN-BN (oos)

Around the Depots

(All vehicles listed below allocated to relevant depot except where stated. All dates May 2024 except where stated.)

First Essex peak vehicle requirement (PVR) figures from 2 June 2024 service changes:

	Mon-Fri Schooldays	Saturdays	Sundays
BN - Basildon	66	56	29
CF - Chelmsford	76	63	30
CR - Colchester	68	53	31
HH - Hadleigh	58	45	24
Totals	268	217	114
Change from Oct 2023	+8	+12	+1

Chelmsford is broken down to 34 Main, 31 Town, 3 Schools, 8 Airlink (M-F); 29 Main, 26 Town, 8 Airlink (Sat); 13 Main, 12 Town, 5 Airlink (Sun).

Colchester is broken down to 31 Main, 32 Town, 5 Airlink (M-F); 20 Main, 28 Town, 5 Airlink (Sat); 8 Main, 18 Town, 5 Airlink (Sun).

With thanks to Sean Menzies for extracting this data from Bustimes files made available under the BODS (Bus Open Data Service) Regulations. The previous table was in EBM 715 after the 29 October 2023 service changes.

Following a reported safety incident, front wheel trims are being removed from the fleet.

Colchester

Not previously reported is that 37138 had the purple vinyl around its front destination box (which it had when acquired) removed last July.

Further to last month, 32526, 32530, 32532, 32628, 32642, 32669, 37005, 37010, 37015, 37020, 37027 and 37035 were on the scrap line on 30 May, but 32676 and 37053 were not seen. Long term off road (since 19 March) 33689 was also still there and has been heavily cannibalised, recently joined by off road 33678. 37042 returned to service during April and 63337 did so on 24 May. 63341 has now had its new engine fitted, but was towed to Ipswich on 30th for more work. An addition to the line on 1 June was 32672. This had been in service the day before, so it is not certain if it has been withdrawn, an update will be provided next month.

News of the Harwich routes (4-31 May).

The majority of 102/104 journeys were worked by every in service Wrightbus StreetLite, plus Volvo B7RLEs 69515 - 69520. The three Colchester ADL Enviro 200 MMCs in Airlink livery reached Harwich a few times: 67189 (9th), 67190 (13th, 24th) and 67192 (13th, 17th).

The normal double deck workings of 0830 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1008 return on schooldays continued to be worked by a mixture of Volvo B7TLs, Volvo B9TLs and ADL Enviro 400s. During the half term school holidays, the double deck working was 0915 Mistley - Colchester 104, worked by 33672 (28th), 33663 (29th) and 37140 (30th), but on 31st, this journey was worked by single deck 69517. The 1725 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1900 Harwich - Colchester 102 produced five double-deckers: 33671 (14th), 32673 (15th), 33690 (20th), 37621 (30th) and 33825 (31st).

Highlight of the month was ADL Enviro 400 MMC 34423 in Network Norwich livery which worked the late single deck duty on 17th: 1135 Colchester - Harwich 104 to 1615 Harwich - Colchester 104, 1810 Colchester - Maldon 75 & 1920 return and finished on 2035 Colchester - Harwich 102. On 31st, Enviro 400 33718, recently transferred from First Leicester, worked a single deck duty on 104 from 0710 Colchester - Harwich 104 to 1645 Colchester - Harwich 104.

Clacton routes.

Reported on route 74B this period have been: 33669 (28th), 33686 (1 June), 33687 (9th), 33671 (29th), 33713 (31st), 33825 (18th), 37016 (30th), 37135 (25th), 37613 (11th), 47430 (24th), 47679 (15th, 17th), 47680 (10th), 63334 (14th), 63335 (21st), Airlink liveried 67189 (8th) & 67192 (13th), 69517 (7th, 22nd), Thamesway liveried 69520 (16th, 20th).

Route 76: 69515 (6th, Bank Holiday Monday), 47666 & 63329 (12th), 47658 & 69518 (19th), 63330 (26th), 37054 & 37062 (27th, Bank Holiday Monday), 63328 (2 June).

Double-deckers noted on route X20 have been Enviro 400s 33663, 33669, 33680, 33682, 33687, 33690, 33692 and 33713; Enviro 400 MMCs 34421, 34422 and 34423 - the first and last of these appeared briefly in Network Norwich livery before being repainted into Airlink livery, these three buses should now be the main allocation of double-deckers on the route; Volvo B9TL / Geminis 37140 and 37613.

Also on the route were B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2s 69516 (6th), 69519 (9th).

Single-deckers on route 320: 63335 (9th), 67189 (10th).

The former Haven Road depot in Colchester had been vacated by Blackstone Kitchens by mid-May 2024.

Chelmsford

69430, with fairly significant front end accident damage (incurred on 10 April), was the only vehicle on the scrap line on 7 May.

Red shuttle liveried 67167 has a bright green skirt panel on the offside.

Enviro 400 MMCs on X30: 33994 (9th-10th, 17th, 30th), 33995 (7th, 17th, 20th, 30th), 33996 (6th, 8th, 21st-22nd), 33997 (18th-22nd, 30th), 33998 (12th-13th, 16th, 23rd-25th, 28th-29th, 1-2 June) plus newly acquired 34424, 34425 and 34426 (in Network Norwich livery) became regulars on the route towards the end of May. Also, unusually, one Enviro 400, 33705 (18th, 31st).

67164 a single-decker on 372 (16th).

Basildon

44598 has been withdrawn from service.

Double-deckers on X10 shorts: 33414 (10th), 33545 (31st), 33546 (23rd), 33552 (9th), 33555 (15th), 33558 (20th), 33561 (13th), 33563 (9th-11th), 33574 (22nd), 33725 (14th, 22nd), 33987 (23rd), 33988 (31st).

The short journeys on route X10 were replaced by new route B5 from 3 June.

Hadleigh's 47643 was on loan from 16-19 May inclusive, reported on B3, X10 and 100.

44001 on 22 (18th), on 251 (26th, 27th, Bank Holiday Monday and 2 June). 44001 (22nd) & 44080 (10th, 21st, 24th) on 9. 44909 on 25 (22nd), on 9 (23rd & 1 June). 67168 on 300 (22nd).

Hadleigh

StreetLite 47644 has received a super rear advert for Efteling, Holland's largest theme park (it is not known when this was applied).

44927 on 25 (10th).

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Stephen Barham, David Edwards, Matthew Elsey, John Lidstone, Gareth Norris, John Podgorski, Derek Stebbing, Andrew Toms, Robert West, Bustimes, Bus Lists on the Web, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

First Essex News in Pictures

Network Norwich ... in Norwich, Colchester & Chelmsford

Enviro 400 MMC 34421 (SN17 MTO) when with First Eastern Counties on the Norwich (Costessey Park & Ride) on 4 April 2023.

Mark Doggett



34423 (SN17 MTV) on its first day in service with First Essex, 15 May 2024, at Colchester Station on route X20.

David Edwards



34424 (SN17 MTX) also on its first day of service with First Essex, at Chelmsford Bus Station on 20 May 2024, ready for route 170 to Braintree.

Derek Stebbing

By 24 May, sister 34426 (also allocated to Chelmsford) had had most of its Network Norwich branding removed, including the red side adverts.



Sadly, with the introduction of the new corporate livery, no more vehicles will be repainted into the excellent Essex Bus green and red shuttles liveries. Hopefully, the liveries will be around for a while yet on buses already in these colours.

Green amongst green.
Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus
Eclipse Urban 69421
(AU58 FFH) at Colchester
Road, Witham on 3 May
2024. As reported in
'Service Revisions' last
month, off peak X71
journeys will run as 71 from
2 June, although still going
to Colchester.

John Podgorski

Enviro 200 MMC 67167
(YY66 PBV) on route C1 on
Broomfield Road,
Chelmsford on 4 May 2024.

David Moth



Acquired StreetLite 47630
(SN15 ADU) at Mardens on
22 May 2024, awaiting
repaint from Manchester
Bee Network livery into new
corporate livery (see page
12). Behind is one of the
Ensignbus open top Volvo
B9TL / Geminis for route 99
awaiting repaint, either 366
(37408, MX58 DXV) or
367 (37410, MX58 DXZ).

John G Lidstone





Disposal

Iveco / Excel minibus DB10 PAN (ex VV10 ERN) was sold in late May, to Stonelaw Minibus Hire, Glasgow.

Closure

Sadly, operations will cease at the end of July. As a Group, we wish Adam Barham and those at Panther Travel all the very best for the future. Adam has supplied news on a monthly basis and provided coaches for Group Tours as well as hosting visits.

With thanks to Adam Barham.



Mark Lloyd

Acquired Vehicles

832	YN57 FYC	Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka	H47/28F	Ex Brighton & Hove 675
828	YN57 FYL	Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka	H47/28F	Ex Brighton & Hove 681
	YN57 FYM	Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka	H47/28F	Ex Brighton & Hove 682

These are additional to the four similar buses from the same source reported last month.

Vehicles Withdrawn

525	LX05 EZH	Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini.	Withdrawn following small fire damage April 2024.
573	W491 WGH	Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President.	Withdrawn on MOT expiry May 2024.

525 is the first of the 05/06 plate Geminis to be officially withdrawn although one or two more from the batch are not active currently. 573 was the last of the 'original' refurbished batch, 561-581, acquired soon after the Go-Ahead takeover, and leaves just 587 as the remaining ex-East Yorkshire President from the large batch of Presidents once operated, 560-588.

Significant Allocations

259	SY - HD - KN	by 26 April, back at HD by 17 May
261	KN - CN	by 16 April - returned to KN by 29 April
528	CN - KN	by 19 April, back to CN 26 April but at KN by 22 May
828	CNu - CN	by 15 May
832	CNu - CN	by 17 May

Fleet News

YN57 FYM arrived at CN by 7 May but had mechanical issues en-route to Essex so did not enter service straight away. 828 (YN57 FYL) commenced service on 15 May on route 74. 832 (YN57 FYC) commenced service on 17 May on route 4. Reported in fleet lists elsewhere, but previously not reported here, is Ford Transit 9037 (HV17 KVR), a white 16-seater, ex-Go Cornwall, for a school contract. Presumably it is the replacement for 955 (RE66 VOB) Mercedes which went to Dereham and was replaced for a period by hired vehicle YF17 LT,V as reported in EBM 711. Confirmation of this would be appreciated.

Vehicles long-term off-road May 2024 - 234/274/276/287/457/458/512/517/525/573/802.

Other News

From Sunday 26 May, residents living in the villages along route 753 will now be able to reach Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury Town Centre later into the evening and on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Heddingham & Chambers will receive a proportion of the Bus Service Improvement Plan 2 funding allocated to Suffolk County Council by the UK Government, following a successful bid to enhance its existing bus service. Route 753 travels from Bury St Edmunds, serving Long Melford, Acton, Great Waldingfield, Lavenham, Cross Green, Stanningfield, Sicklemere, West

Suffolk Hospital and Sudbury Bus Station. These villages, which have not had a bus service on a Sunday for many years, have fully supported the expansion of this service and councillors and parishes have expressed that it will make a significant difference to their local community. The service will expand opportunities to use the bus to commute for work, for medical appointments, enjoy days and nights out for leisure and offer more independence for young people to be mobile without having to rely on a car or family for a lift. The last bus will depart Bury St Edmunds Bus Station at 2230, arriving in Sudbury Bus Station 2325 every Monday to Saturday, with a Sunday service leaving at 0830 from Sudbury Bus Station until the last service at 1615.

Gavin Smith, Managing Director for Go East Anglia commented: "We are delighted to work with the local parishes and Suffolk County Council to improve our current service and offer a more accessible bus service. With the ongoing £2 single fare scheme in place until the end of 2024, residents can now take full advantage of the cost savings bus travel offers all week long and access the services they need, when they need them. Introducing enhancements to local bus services places significant pressure on bus operators with costs for implementation high. Support through the BSIP 2 funding allows ideas to be evaluated but generating a strong passenger base is essential to the longer-term continuation of these enhancements."

As referenced above, Brighton & Hove 682 (YN57 FYM) moved to Hedingham in early May. Previously named 'Samuel Lewis', the bus undertook a very special journey before reaching Essex. A teenage schoolboy who was fascinated by 682 in Brighton, which had been the first bus he rode on as a 5-year-old, was surprised at his local school by the bus arriving to take him and his family on a tour of the area and the local bus depot. B&H Accessibility and Communities manager Victoria Garcia said "It was a pleasure to meet him and we wanted to ensure one last trip on the bus before retirement. He was presented with the name panel removed from the bus and it was also arranged for the registration and fleet numbers to be added". To note, Samuel Lewis was a wealthy man by 1901 when he died, he was a money lender and was inspirational in setting up affordable housing. Having a home in Hove, his legacy can be traced to the UK's largest providers of rented housing, The Southern Housing Group.

With thanks to Dave Arnold, John Podgorski & the Hedingham website.

Below: Chambers in Basildon. Double-deckers seem to have become common on Hedingham routes 94/A/B recently. Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekka 800 (YN53 RYP), with Chambers fleet names, has just left Basildon Bus Station on its way to South Woodham Ferrers on 15 May 2024. **Nick Street**



Acquired Vehicles

The ex-Nottingham Enviro 200s have now been allocated fleet numbers, 491-6 (YX63 GXV, GXW, KFG, KFJ, KFK, LHU). At least 492-5 entered service during May from Haverhill depot, still in Nottingham livery. All are expected to be repainted and retrimmed, 491 had been completed by the end of May and it is thought that 496 was in progress.

Further to EBM 720, the three ex-Lloyds Scania N230 / ADL Enviro 400s have not yet entered service.

Disposal

Former Galloway Volvo B7TL 702 (EX04 VKD) has been sold to Smith & Sons Coaches, Coupar Angus, Perthshire.

Right & Below:

Ex Nottingham City Transport Enviro 200s in acquired liveries. 495 (YX63 KFK) in blue and grey at Stansted Airport on route 316 on 22 May 2024.

David Moth



492 (YX63 GXW) in red and grey on the double-run to Widdington at the delightful Fleur-de-Lys pub where it will shortly reverse at the end of the village for return on 10 May 2024.

Owen Woodliffe



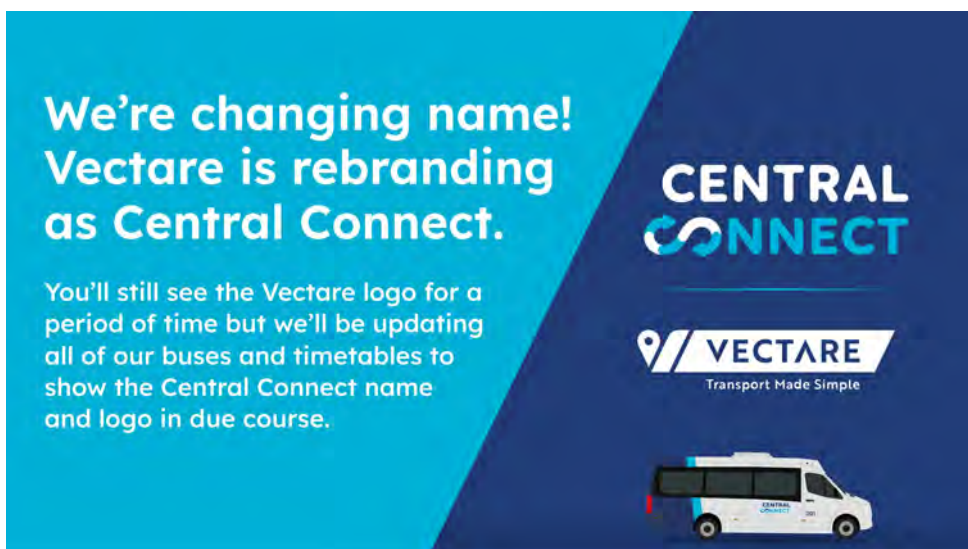
Services

Following the latest Essex County Council tender round for local bus services, NIBS have won the following: 14 (Wickford local), 21 (North Benfleet-Basildon, peaks & Saturdays), 61 (Brentwood-Blackmore), 71/2 (Brentwood-Stondon Massey), 94/A/B (Basildon-South Woodham), 104/6 (Basildon-Laindon) and have retained the 269 (Brentwood-Grays) and 565 (Brentwood- Bulphan). Stephensons have retained the 7/7A (Bishop's Stortford-Stansted), 14 (Southend-Foulness), 30 (Braintree local), 32 (Chelmsford-Ongar), 60/A (Southend-Canewdon) and 313/4 (Saffron Walden-Dunmow) and have won 174/5 (Colchester-Fingringhoe) and the full substantive timetables for the following Uttlesford routes which Central Connect ceased and Stephensons and A2B have been covering on short-term contracts: 301 (Bishop's Stortford-Saffron Walden), 316/8 (Stansted Airport-Saffron Walden) and 59/590/319/20/1 (Haverhill-Audley End). All the new contracts start on 28 July.



End of Vectare Name

The following was announced on 28 May 2024:



Disposals

StreetLite 911, ex 1202 (CC11 BUS), which has been out of service for a few months, has left the fleet.

Further to the report of Enviro 200 MMCs 331-340 in EBM 721, 332 is confirmed as also sold. 335 and 339 were seen at Anston as ADL dealer stock in all white at the beginning of May. 337 is now with AirSym, Colnbrook in all white livery with blue 'Transport UK Rail Replacement' fleet names.

Other Vehicle News

316 has a super rear advert for Roni's Restaurant, Bishop's Stortford.

350 and 351 have super rear adverts for Pircio, another restaurant in Bishop's Stortford.

With thanks to John Podgorski and LOTS.



Above: As reported last month, Enviro 200 MMC 344 (JW16 BUS), new to Whitelaws, Stonehouse, Lanarkshire, and later to Redline Buses then Red Rose, was acquired in March this year. It is in Whitelaws silver and black livery but with fleet name and red / blue / white relief removed and with front bumpers painted red. It is seen on route 9 at Braintree Bus Interchange on 7 May 2024. **John Podgorski**

Other Operators

Roger A Smith

Barker, Roydon

RGZ 6267(ex AXI 297), an Ayats CH71F bodied MAN ND365F, has gone from here.

Bus 62, Wickford

Scania K114EB4, registration YN56 FGM, with Irizar C49FT body, was withdrawn from service in March and is no longer here.

1st Direct Coaches, South Woodham Ferrers

RK68 LXD, an Iveco 65C18 (C22F), has gone to Streamline, Maidstone, Kent.

Lodge Coaches, High Easter

Optare Solo M970 SR YJ62 FXA has been acquired to replace Optare Solo M950SL YJ07 VTA. The latter was illustrated on the inside front cover of EBN 682 (February 2021), soon after its own acquisition in December 2020. YJ62 FXA was originally a dual-door vehicle new to Epsom Coaches for TfL work, but was later converted to single-door.

Peter Godward Coaches, Basildon

T123 PGC, a Scania K340EB with Irizar C49FT body, is now with A&A Coach Travel, Bramley, West Yorkshire.



Above: Although Acme, now based near Saffron Walden, no longer undertake stage carriage work, they have several school contracts and Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekka YN55 NLA, new to London United, was passing through Newport on 10 May 2024. **Owen Woodliffe**

Prestige Coaches, Crawley, West Sussex

This company has applied for an operator's licence with a vehicle authorisation of 15 for an operating centre at Industrial Estate, Station Road, Station Approach, Burnham-on-Crouch.

With thanks to John Podgorski and the PSV Circle.

Below: Another ex-London United Scania N94UD, this time with Scania's own OmniCity bodywork, Underworld Tours YN56 FBX at the BP Garage, Four Wantz, Ongar on 21 May 2024 in Gangster Tours livery. **Robert Downton**



In EBM Extra 6 (Spring 2024) member David Edwards, a bus driver with Eastern National and First Essex for nearly half a century, was asked what the best type of bus over his career had been, not from an enthusiasts' point of view, but as one to spend seven hours or more a day in the driving cab of. His response was "I think the best all-rounder to have in service with a spacious cab, everything close to hand as well ease of driving, an automatic gearbox but with 'holds', has to be the Scania L94UB with Wrightbus Solar body". In a multi-part article, Robert Appleton looks at these and other Scania buses operated by First Essex Buses.

Part One 1999-2004



Above: Numerically the first Scania in the Essex Buses fleet, 650 (T650 SSF), route branded for service 65 and with flip dot destination displays, is seen at Colchester Bus Station on 29 April 2000, with 'Centurion 65' branding but without 'Eastern National' subsidiary fleet names. **Robert Appleton**

1. A Brief History of Scania

In 1891, Vagonfabrik Aktia Bolaget I Sodertalje, trading as the acronym Vabis, was formed at Sodertalje near Stockholm to build railway wagons. In the early years of the 20th century Vabis moved to building cars and trucks.

In the city of Malmo, in Sweden's southernmost region, Skane County, an engineering company Maskinfabriksaktiebolaget Scania had also started to build cars and trucks. In 1911 the two companies merged to form Scania-Vabis. After a few years, production of cars and trucks was concentrated on Sodertalje, which today is still Scania's headquarters and main factory. Car production later stopped to concentrate on commercial vehicles. Much later the Vabis name was dropped in favour of just Scania. Scania is the English translation of the Swedish Skane.

Scania-Vabis built their first bus in 1925, and their first diesel engine in 1936. Scania has always built more commercial vehicles than buses and coaches. Most buses and coaches built are chassis rather than complete vehicles, so Scania has always worked closely with bodybuilders.

In this country, Scania worked with Metro Cammell Weymann to produce the Metro-Scania single-decker in 1969, and the Metropolitan double-decker in 1973. Other bodybuilders built on the Scania N112 and N113 step entry double-deck chassis. In 2003 Scania worked with East Lancs to produce the low floor OmniDekka. For coaches, the Spanish firm Irizar have bodied many Scania chassis for the UK market.

2. Low Entry Easy Access Single-Deckers

The first Scania low entry wheelchair accessible single-decker for this country was the N113CRL with a 11.3 litre vertical engine mounted transversely at the rear, this was built between 1993 and 1995. East Lancs bodied 12 as the MaxCi. Another 30 had Wrightbus Pathfinder bodies for London Regional Transport.

A large vertical transverse rear engine meant several steps up to the rear of the bus or wasted space. Bus operators wanted to maximise seating capacity. So the next development was the Scania L113CRL with the rear engine mounted in line but angled 60 degrees to the left to give a lower rear floor. The L113CRL had Wrightbus Access-Ultralow bodies in this country, 330 were built from 1995 to 1998.

Euro 3 emission requirements meant that Scania developed a new range of engines, there was a 9.4 litre engine for the L chassis. Thus, the Scania L94UB with Wrightbus Access-Floline bodies were built in 1998/99. Then Wrightbus introduced a new range of bodywork for the L94UB, this was the Solar, built from 2000 to 2009. The L113CRL and L94UB had ZF 4 speed fully automatic transmission. They were 11.95m long and 2.50m wide.

3. Scania Chassis Codes

First letter:

K = chassis with rear in line vertical engine.

L = chassis with rear in line engine inclined 60 degrees to the left.

N = chassis with rear vertical transverse engine.

Then two or three numbers:

94 = 9.4 litre engine. Later changed to show engine horsepower.

Next letter:

I = Intercity i.e., coach.

U = Urban i.e., bus.

Next letter:

A = articulated bus.

B = single-deck bus or coach.

D = double-deck bus.

As examples, First North West Scania / Irizar coaches 23017-20 were K114IB, i.e., 11.4 litre engine, First Essex Buses Scania double-deckers 36837-36843 are N250UD i.e., 250hp engine. The Scania OmniLinks in the Go-Ahead Chambers and Hedingham fleets are K230UB i.e., 230hp engine.

4. New and Nearly New for (First) Essex Buses

The first Scania for Essex Buses Ltd were L94UBs with Wrightbus Access Floline B43F bodies new in April 1999, 650-654 (T650-654 SSF). They had Scottish registrations because they were supplied by Reliable Vehicles, a Scottish Scania dealership used by First Group. Allocated to Colchester for 'Centurion 65', Highwoods - Stanway, for which they carried route branding on their First corporate livery (Barbie). They were the only Scania to carry 'Eastern National' fleet names, albeit as small subsidiary ones to the main 'First' names, before these were dropped by First as part of its push in the early 2000s for a fully corporate identity. They replaced 722-726 (R722-726 HHK) Dennis / Plaxton Super Pointer Darts (see inside front cover) which moved to First Huddersfield.

The seating layout of 650-654 was as follows. On the offside, one inward facing seat behind the driver's cab. Then offside buggy bay with one rear facing seat, and one forward facing seat. On the nearside, the wheelchair bay had three inward facing tip-up seats. Then eight rows of double seats (with facing seats over the rear wheel arches, a

feature of Scania) and a rear seat for five, total 43. The wheelchair bay and tip up seats required variable passenger capacities to be displayed in the bus, for example: 43 seats and 30 standing, or 40 seats and 38 standing, or 40 seats and 28 standing and 1 wheelchair. In this article I have used the maximum seating capacity. Destination displays were flip dot, with route numbers in the nearside front window and rear. The interior was to the then relatively new First Group standard, with purple moquette seats and light blue handrails.

The next Scania L94UBs had the new Wrightbus Solar B43F bodies. They were acquired in July 2002 to convert Premier 100 service, Chelmsford - Basildon - Lakeside, to low floor operation, replacing step entry Dennis Dart / Plaxton Pointers. The batch of 13 were 655-667 (SN51 UYG/K/XX/YA/D/H/L/XY/YB/E/J/XZ/YC). They had been built as dealer stock in November 2001, thus they had non-standard seats with a red based moquette and yellow handrails. 655-659 came from First Edinburgh, 660-667 were also new to First Edinburgh, but came from First Midland Bluebird. All 13 received turquoise Overground 100 branding and were allocated to Basildon (although 658 initially did not have this branding, receiving it later).

More ex-dealer stock Scania L94UB / Wrightbus Solar B43Fs arrived in June-August 2003. They were 668 (YPO2 ABN), new in March 2002, and 669-675 (YR52 VEH/K/L/P/U/Y/VFO), new in November 2002. These had the same interiors as the SN51 batch (right: 671). 668 had been used as a demonstrator and loaned to Ipswich Buses when new. 669-674 had been used by Menzies Aviation at Heathrow Airport when new, then loaned to Brighton & Hove from March 2003 before coming to First Essex Buses, the 'First' having been added to the company name in January 2003.



When acquired in June 2003, 668 and 675 went immediately on loan to First Eastern Counties before returning the next month. The former was numbered 602 whilst with FEC and is seen **below** in Surrey Street Bus Station, Norwich on 4 June 2003. **Robert Appleton**



668, 669 and 675 were allocated to Colchester, 668 and 675 received red Overground route branding for service 65 ('Overground' replacing 'Centurion') but 669 remained unbranded. 670-674 were allocated to Chelmsford and received claret Chelmsford - Burnham Connections branding for services 31/31X.

Another 12 Scania L94UBs arrived in June 2003. These were brand new with Wrightbus Solar B44F bodies. One more seat because the two facing single-seats in the offside buggy bay were replaced with three inward facing tip-up seats. These had the First Group purple moquette and light blue handrails. The allocated fleet numbers were 676-687 (YSO3 ZKA/B/C/D/E/F/G/H/J/K/L/M). 678/682-687 were allocated to Colchester and received red Overground route branding for service 65. Thus, the first Scania at Colchester, 650-654, moved from service 65 to service 64, for which they received blue Overground route branding.

676/677/679/680/681 never carried these fleet numbers. When new they were diverted on loan to First Hampshire & Dorset for the Jurassic Coast service X53, Wareham - Exeter, pending delivery of new double-deckers for this route. First Group had started renumbering their fleet into the Sema Voyager engineering asset management system. Each bus received a five-digit fleet number which it kept for its whole life. Buses were not renumbered when they moved from one subsidiary to another. Large single deckers were numbered in the 6xxxx series. When the renumbering started it was done subsidiary by subsidiary, so Scania in the first subsidiaries to be renumbered such as First West Yorkshire and First Glasgow received fleet numbers in the 60xxx and 61xxx series. Whilst with First Hampshire & Dorset, YSO3 ZKA/B/E/D/F were numbered in the Sema series as 62406/7/8/9/10 in that order. So they kept these fleet numbers when they eventually reached First Essex Buses in April and May 2004, and were allocated to Colchester.

When First Essex buses received the Sema fleet numbers in March 2004, First Group were by then allocating fleet numbers by vehicle type, so Scania were receiving 65xxx numbers, thus the First Essex Scania were renumbered: 650-654 to 65650-65654

655-667 to 65673/76/65/68/71/74/77/66/69/72/75/67/70 (i.e., in the batch 65665-65677. Note, they did not follow directly on from 65654 as 65662-4 had already been allocated elsewhere within the Group).

668-675 to 65678-65685

678 to 65686

682-687 to 65687-65692.

The slightly odd renumbering of 655-667 was because they had originally been numbered in chassis number order, but the Sema renumbering put them into registration number order (although 62408/9 were not). 682 was originally mistakenly renumbered to 62409, the number carried by YSO3 ZKD, still with FH&D at the time, but was corrected a couple of months later.

Destination Displays on 655-687

SN51 batch (655-667): The first ten in fleet number order entered service with First Essex with roller destination and route number blinds which were later converted to LEDs. These never had flip dots. The last three had flip dot blinds, 666 retained these throughout its life, 665 retained these at the front throughout its life but side and rear were later converted to LED, and 667 was later converted to all round LEDs. (It is possible, although there is no evidence of this, that 665-667 were also new with roller blinds and were converted to flip dot before entering service with First Essex.)

YP02 ABN and YR52 batch (668-675): All had roller blinds when new, but all entered service with First Essex with these converted to flip dot destination displays. All retained these throughout their lives with FE, except for 672 which had its front blinds converted to LED very late in life, in February 2016. Also, the rear blind on 668 was later converted to LED, then paneled over and, later still, reinstated! 673 later had its side and rear blinds (only) converted to LEDs.

YSO3 batch (676-687): All had roller blinds when new. Those that entered service with FH&D did so with these. However, all the batch had the destination displays converted to flip dot before entering service with First Essex. They all retained these for the rest of their lives with FE, except for ZKF (the planned 681) which later acquired LED displays. Also, 678 and 687 later acquired side and rear LEDs but retained their front flip dots.

65671 (SN51 UYD), new as 659, with Overground 100 branding at Showbus, Duxford on 24 September 2006. It has original roller blinds.

Adam Kelleher



65684 (YR52 VEY), new as 674, on route 31X at Coval Lane, Chelmsford on 8 October 2005, whilst Chelmsford Bus Station was being rebuilt. With Connection branding for routes 31 / 31X. As mentioned on the previous page, this had roller blinds when new, but entered service with First Essex with these converted to flip dot destination displays.

Adam Kelleher



682 (YS03 ZKG), later to become 65687, at Colchester Bus Station on 20 September 2003 with an updated version of route 65 branding compared to the photos on the inside front cover and page 24.

Robert Appleton



To be continued.

Visitors to Walton-on-the Naze

Robert Appleton

As summer approaches, a brief look at coaches at Walton-on-the-Naze in 2022. This feature was originally intended to be published at the time, but space was not available.

The word 'Naze' in Walton-on-the-Naze is derived from the old English word 'naess' meaning promontory or headland. The Naze itself is north east of the town jutting out into the North Sea. The Naze cliffs are a site of Special Scientific Interest, consisting of London clay, Red Crag, Thames sands and gravels, over 40 million years old. This combination over a very long period of time provides a rich source of fossils including sharks' teeth and whale bones. The Naze and adjoining Hamford Water is an important habitat for sea birds and migrating birds, and the nearby Walton Backwaters is home to grey seals. The Essex Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre at the Naze has more information about it, including its geology and wildlife. Dominating the landscape is the Naze Tower, 86ft high, built by Trinity House in 1720 as a navigational aid. It was also used as a lookout in the Napoleonic wars, and a radar station in World War Two. Today the tower has an art exhibition and cafe. It is worth climbing the 111 steps of the spiral staircase for the views from the top of the tower of the Naze, Hamford Water and Felixstowe Docks.

The Naze cliffs have suffered from coastal erosion, but a lot of work has been undertaken to stop this, including the Crag Walk platform and sea wall completed in 2011. Hopefully this will prove to be successful to counter predictions of the Naze Tower collapsing into the North Sea in 50 years' time. Thus with its history, geology and ornithology, the Naze is a popular destination for school trips at the end of the school year in June / July, for both primary and secondary school children. Coach parking on the Naze is very restricted, three at most, so most coaches park at the Bath House Meadow Coach Park in Walton-on-the-Naze. All photos taken at the Coach Park except two as stated in the captions.

Incidentally, the word 'the' in the town's name is a relatively recent addition. The railway station was named 'Walton-on-Naze' when it opened in May 1867 and only became 'Walton-on-the-Naze' in May 2007.

With thanks to Essex Wildlife Trust (essexwt.org.uk) and Wikipedia.



Essex Operators

Previous Page: Brentwood Coaches BSV 572 (ex-YN55 YSE), an Irisbus 397E.12.31 / Plaxton Paragon, new in February 2006 to Felix, Stanley. This and the other Brentwood Coaches coach behind had managed to secure parking spots on the Naze on 9 June 2022. The Tower is on the right and the building in the left background is the Essex Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre. **Robert Appleton**

Top Right: Jacksons of Bicknacre Mercedes-Benz Tourismo BF60 OFX on 21 June 2022. It was new to Swans, Chadderton, Greater Manchester in January 2011, passing to Minibus Executive (MET Coaches), Rickmansworth, in July 2013 and Jacksons by March 2017.

Right: YN09 OWZ, a rare 12.8m Plaxton Paragon bodied Irisbus Eurorider, with APT Coaches of Rayleigh, one of just five of this combination built. New to Austin, Earlston. Photo taken on 22 June 2022, since then APT has become part of REL Davian.

Right: Last month we reported the death of Peter Godward, director and co-founder of Basildon operator Peter Godward Coaches. In tribute, here is one of his coaches, with a personalised number plate. Irizar i6 integral CC17 PGC on 22 June 2022.

All this page: **Alan Moore**



South East Coaches,
Wickford, Setra S415HD
GRS 2450 on 27 June
2022.

Alan Moore



Lodge's JW10 DGE (ex
BV10 ZJX), a Setra
S416GT-HD, also on 27
June 2022. When new,
this coach was in a gold
livery to celebrate Lodge's
90th anniversary. Its sale to
R&J Coaches, Smeeth, Kent
was reported in EBM 718.

Robert Appleton



Cooks of Southend Bova
Futura FHD12-340 WA54
HYC, 22 June 2022.

Alan Moore



Visitors from further afield

Anderson Travel, Tower Bridge Road, London SE1, PO17 EKP, a MAN 19.360 / Barbi Galileo, new May 2017. Carrozzeria Barbi was an Italian coachbuilder founded in 1905 which went into liquidation in 2018. A successor company called Barbi Coach and Bus srl manufactures school buses only. 9 June 2022.

Robert Appleton



Dhillon of London, Southall DN17 LON, a Volvo B11R / Plaxton Panther, on 7 July 2022.

Robert Appleton



Tates Coaches, Luton, Scania K360IB4 / Irizar i6 YR17 CYF passing the Bath House public house in Prince's Esplanade, Walton-on-the-Naze on 21 June 2022. It will shortly be turning into the coach park. New to Harry Shaw, Coventry.

Alan Moore



From the Colour Archives



Here is another photo taken at the Southend Bus Rally, this time on 3 June 1979, showing just how difficult it was at times to get photos amongst the crowds. London Transport Leyland Titan T16 (WYV 16T), which had been new in February 1979. It has a 'Multi-Ride' sticker. Some Eastern National vehicles also received these for services into the London Borough of Havering. **Eric Thompson**

Rear Cover Photos

As reported on pages 1 and 9, and also illustrated on page 1, the three Ensignbus recently acquired open toppers worked on routes 68 and 99 on Saturday 25 May 2024, as did open top RM371.

Top: Bristol VR HKE 690L (named 'Angie') on route 99 at Shoeburyness East Beach. Both this and KMW 175P were named whilst with Seaford & District. Angie was the name of owner David Mulpeter's late wife. **Richard Delahoy**

Bottom: Fleetline KMW 175P (named 'I K Brunel') on route 68 passes Queen Mary BUF 426C on route 99 at the Pier stop on Western Esplanade.

Matthew Evans

This page right: The Fleetline and the VR meet up at the Pier. Note that the Fleetline has both Daimler and Leyland badges! **Richard Delahoy**





ESSEX BUS MAGAZINE Issue 722 June 2024

Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964