

ESSEX BUS NEWS

**No.576
April 2012**



ESSEX BUS ENTHUSIASTS GROUP
www.essexbus.org.uk



Stephensons have had Enviro 200 demonstrator YX61 DOU covering for warranty work on their own Enviros, here seen in Fambridge Road Maldon on 24 March. *Dave Arnold*

Logic Bus of Broadley Common is a new stage operator. Dart/Plaxton T35 KLD, formerly Metroline DLD 115 and still in its colours, enters Brookfield Centre, Cheshunt on route L3. *Owen Woodliffe*



Essex Bus News

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Your reports and observations

Members reports, quality photos (prints, slides or JPGs) and original articles are always welcome.

The Editors exercise the normal discretion to publish contributions in full, in part or not at all and cannot guarantee publication in any particular month.

Every effort is made to ensure accuracy but the Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors published.

Views expressed in EBN do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Group.

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Dates for your diary

■ EBN PRESS DATES

EBN dated

May

June

reports to Editors by

May 5

June 2

Despatch day is posted to the website as soon as it is known. Please allow reasonable time for postal delays (at least seven working days) before claiming non-receipt. Replacements can be obtained from the Distribution Officer (see Group Directory).

■ SOUTH ESSEX MEETINGS

Venue - April and May meetings will be at a different venue - Freight House(Committee Room) adjacent to Rochford Station. This is the same venue before move to Wickford. The

Cover

A foggy day at Tilbury Civic Square, but not due to bus exhaust fumes! **Ensignbus** ex Dublin Bus Wright Hybrid Volvo 501 on its first day in service, 24th March. *Russell Young*

Committee Room is at the far end of the building, through doors and upstairs where it is adjacent to the Administration Office. There is ample parking immediately outside. Doors open at 1930 for an informal chat, with the main talk or show from 2000 to 2145/2200. Members and guests welcome. £1.50 donation please towards the hire of the room

- ▶ **Monday April 30** - Scotland 25 years ago. Slides by Richard Delahoy from a two-week tour in 1986.
- ▶ **Monday May 28** - speaker tba
- ▶ **Tuesday June 26** - Visit to Castlepoint Transport Museum. Meet 19.00 onwards. There is no charge for the visit but a collection will be taken towards the Museum's restoration fund.
- ▶ In **July** a visit is planned to Nelson's (NIBS) at Wickford. Date to be confirmed. Meetings return to usual Wickford venue for **September 17, October 29, November 26, December 18.**

■ NORTH ESSEX MEETINGS

Venue: downstairs room at the Friends Meeting House, Church Street, Colchester, just south of "Jumbo" (the water tower) and behind the Mercury Theatre. Town centre bus stops and parking are nearby. Doors open at 1915 for an informal chat, with the main talk or show from 1945 to 21.45. PLEASE NOTE NEW TIMES: NOW 15 MINUTES EARLIER. £1.50 donation towards room hire, please. Slides/digital photos are preferred, but prints can also be shown. Members and guests welcome. *Dave Arnold*

2012 programme ~ slide shows

- ▶ **Friday April 13** - Gary Sharpe
- ▶ **Friday May 11** - Richard Delahoy
- ▶ **Friday June 8** - Paul Smith
- ▶ **Friday July 13** - Steven Hughes

Other dates: **August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14.** Details to follow.

■ TOURS

- ▶ **Saturday May 26** The 'Interesting Independents' Group Tour. Join us for a full day tour visiting operators with fascinating fleets of both modern and historical vehicles: Dons of Dunmow, Myalls of Bassingbourne, Kenzies of Shepreth, Youngs of Haddenham and Dews of Somersham. Departure Colchester North Station 08.30 (return approx. 18.30) Dunmow High Street 09.30 (return approx. 17.30). To book, please send cheque/P.O. For £20, payable to E.B.E.G., together with a SAE To Keith Woods, 34 Normandie Way, Bures, Suffolk CO8 5BE. Please state choice of pick up point.
- ▶ **Tuesday June 19.** Evening visit to Talisman Coaches. Colchester North Station 19.00. Fare £5

■ EVENTS

- ▶ **Sunday April 15** - North Norfolk Railway Train & Vintage Bus Day.
- ▶ **Saturday April 21** - Theydon Bois Transport Bazaar and Epping Forest Running Day.
- ▶ **Sunday April 29** - London Bus Museum Spring Gathering. Return to Wisley this year.
* Coach from Colchester North Station at 08.00. Fare £12.50 plus entry fee*
- ▶ **Sunday April 29** - Commemorative run on former EN251 routes from Southend (Seaway) to Wood Green. 20 buses expected - in aid of Bosom Pals breast cancer charity - donations are hoped for.

- ▶ **Sunday May 6** - Ipswich to Felixstowe Historic Vehicle Run from Christchurch Park at 11.30.
- ▶ **Sunday/Monday May 6/7** - East Anglian Transport Museum (Carlton Colville) London Event.
- ▶ **Sunday May 20** - Yeldham Transport Museum Open Day. Free transport from Braintree Station and Haverhill.
- ▶ **Sunday June 3** - Clacton Bus Rally. Clacton Factory Outlet. The Group Sales Stall will be at this event.
- ▶ **Sunday June 10** - AEC Event and Pageant. Pump House, Markhouse Avenue, Walthamstow.
- ▶ **Sunday July 1** - North Weald Bus Rally.

Information is published in good faith and members are strongly advised to check details with the organisers, as the Group can accept no liability if events are cancelled or altered.

The 251, Southend to London Wood Green - Road Run, Sunday April 29

The Blackwater Preservation Group is organising a road run over the former City Coach Company / Eastern National route 251, using a variety of preserved buses, many typical of the 251 service. It is hoped that 19 buses or more will participate.

Buses will depart from Southend Seaway car park, the terminus of the route in the late 1960s/early 1970s, the first departing at 1000 and then at 20 minute intervals. Other buses will be starting from Canvey and from Chelmsford, recreating the 151 and 351 variants of the route. The Mayor of Southend (a former Eastern National employee who worked on the 251) will see the first buses away.

It will be possible to join buses at various points en-route and to get off one bus and board another, allowing a variety of rides. Final details were not available as we went to press but can be found at <http://blackwaterpreservationgroup.weebly.com>, by e-mail to bpg3000@hotmail.co.uk or by phone

on 07570 255404.

Some buses will be unable to go all the way to Wood Green because of the London Low Emission Zone rules, these buses will terminate at Brentwood.

The event is being organised in support of Bosom Pals appeal, fund raising to support care and screening for those suffering from breast cancer. As the road run will use preserved buses, no fares can be charged but it is strongly hoped that anyone attending will make a donation in support of the Bosom Pals appeal, either on the day or preferably in advance using gift aid to enhance the value of the donation. Further details will be available on-line or from fund raisers on the buses during the day.

The run will go to Wood Green but may also continue to the Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum. Buses will return to Southend, arriving back at Seaway by 1630.

Richard Delahoy

New members

A warm welcome to new members:

Ken Coldwell, Frinton on Sea, 1047

Mark Graves, Chelmsford, 1048

Connor Clarke, Rayleigh, 1049

Richard Delahoy, Membership Secretary

Group AGM - March 2012

At the Group's AGM on 26th March, we were very pleased to confer Life Membership on Ian Ransom, who has stood down from the committee after 25 years variously as Editor of EBN from 1986, Eastern National/First sub-Editor, tours officer, small operators and publicity sub-Editor. To mark the occasion, Chairman Chris Stewart sprang a surprise presentation on Ian as the formal business came to a close.

The assembled members echoed your Chairman's thanks to all of those involved with EBN and Group matters, particularly officers and committee members David Harman, Richard Delahoy, Alan Osborne, Owen Woodliffe and Keith Woods all of whom were re-elected for a further year (along with me as Chairman). We would welcome another committee member, however, particularly anyone who feels they can help to publicise the Group more widely. Thanks were also expressed to Dave Arnold and Bill Morrison for facilitating area meetings whilst I must thank Bob Palmer for kindly taking the minutes in Alan Osborne's

unavoidable absence.

Essex Bus News, whilst continuing its broad ranging appeal through a mix of news and historical articles, relies on just a few regular people and desperately needs new contributors to lighten the load on all concerned. Simple short articles (say a photo and half a page) would be particularly welcome, especially if they aren't tied to a specific date but can be used whenever space is available. If just 10% of the membership wrote one short piece there would be a stock to last over two years - and we may even be able to provide the photo if you can't! Please contact me initially if you want to discuss something on these lines. And having



recruited Mark Lloyd to cover Heddingham and Ensign, for which we are very grateful, Ian's roles of smaller operators and publicity remain to be filled - if you want to see these

continue in the magazine, please think about stepping forward.

*Chris Stewart
April 2012*

Stuff for EBN

If I had been able to be at the AGM, I would have made the same point that Chris Stewart did.

This month, through a combination of circumstances, no historical articles were ready and waiting. Regular contributors, Chris and Richard were heavily committed with work, family and other matters in the run-up to, and during Easter, as indeed was I. In the event, Chris pulled out all the stops on a part-compiled piece and finished it. So against the odds, there is a fine article for you to read in this EBN.

Since introducing regular historical pieces, these have proved popular. We know this because you've told us. But someone has to research and write them, plus find photos and ephemera etc to illustrate them. It's not that Chris, Richard and I are short of ideas for these. What we *are* short of is the time to translate those ideas into print.

So, the pool of contributors needs to widen if regular historical articles are to continue. These need not be full-blown surveys or in-depth histories - one-pagers are just as welcome - and in fact are especially welcome. Frequently, with EBN just about finished, I am left with a blank page, which means I have to conjure something OR cut

out three pages elsewhere (since the mag has to progress in multiples of four pages). Conjuring something is often impossible given the limited time needed to turn the mag around. So three pages get the chop ...

Reminiscences, memorable journeys, your favourite bus, route, depot, operator etc. are all welcome. If you feel you "can't write" or are uncomfortable with the niceties of spelling and grammar etc, don't worry: basic notes are fine; we can "ghost-write" so long as the raw material is there to begin with. Drafts in most PC/Mac file formats, typewritten or handwritten are all OK. If you can supply photos, timetables, leaflets etc as applicable, fine. If not, we can source these. If your shots (whether in print, slide or digital form) are poor, they can be suitably titivated to reproduction standard.

So, over to you !

Now that Ian Ransom has 'retired', Other Operators and Publicity remain empty editorial slots and this month coverage is limited because no-one has come forward to take them over. Sadly, I don't live in Essex and cannot make up the shortfall. The other editors and Committee already have their hands full. So, once again ... over to you !

David Harman

Group Directory

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A calendar year subscription is £20, renewable in January.

New members may join from any month during the year, 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 £1.70 per month. E.g., a member joining in March would pay 10 x £1.70; i.e. £17.

Data Protection Act: Members' details are held on computer for the purpose of administration. If you object to your information being held in this way, please write to:

Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road
Southend-on-Sea SS1 3TT
richard@signal-training.com

MISSING / DEFECTIVE EBNs

For replacements, contact the Distribution Officer:

Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road,
Chingford, London E4 8PT
pat_woodliffe@hotmail.com

TIMETABLE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Join this scheme to receive the Essex County Council timetable book and bus map. Send

your details and a cheque for £12 to

Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road,
Southend on Sea SS1 3TT.

Subscriptions can start with any issue of the book (usually three a year) and will be renewable annually at the same time as your Group membership subscription is due.

PUBLICATION SALES

Send orders for publications to:

Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road,
Chingford, London E4 8PT

Owen also stocks a wide range of colour photos - send SAE with your requirements.

BLACK & WHITE PHOTO SALES

Lyn Watson
Willow Tree Cottage, 11 Roman Bank,
Gedney Dyke, Lincolnshire, PE12 0AR

Prints of specific EN (and predecessor) vehicles can be supplied; email with requirements:

lynw@barrons-bds.com

Publicity News

New items include:

Essex County Council Bus and Train Maps for Essex, March 2012.

Lodge Coaches Day Trips & Short Breaks 2012.

Richmond's Coaches Day Excursions & Coach Breaks 2012.

A new venture and possible replacement for the Essex County Council comprehensive timetable book has been published by Here to There Publishing Ltd. - **Bus Times the Greater Essex March 2012**. This 850-900 page A5 volume covers Essex plus Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, with a loose map supplied by Essex County Council (also covers Southend), which includes a new South Essex map (covering Brentwood to Southend). A Thurrock map is available separately from Thurrock Council (www.thurrock.gov.uk).

A sample can be downloaded from www.heretotherepublishing.com/essex and you order the book online, paying via Paypal. Copies are printed "on demand" which is



reflected in the price: **£12** special offer until the end of April, **£13.50** thereafter, plus first class packet postage **£8** or Hermes (3-5 day) courier **£5.69**. (please enquire for Highlands and Islands and overseas postage rates).

Note: postage rates increase substantially at the end of April.

Alternatively, you can post orders to **Here to There Publishing Ltd., 15 Titchmarsh Close, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5DD.** (01763 252868).

David Harman, Owen Woodliffe

Service changes

Brentwood Community Transport

6 May 12	228	Sun	Doddingtonhurst to Brentwood: new service.
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Ensign

31 Mar 12	73	D	Tilbury to Lakeside: additional journeys introduced on Saturday nights.
1 Apr 12	22A	Sun	Aveley to Tilbury: revised timetable.

First Essex

1 Apr 12	2	D	Southend to Basildon: minor timetable changes.
	9/10	M-F	Great Notley to Great Bardfield: revision to route of the 1653 journey in Braintree Town Centre.
	15/16	M-F	Southend to Basildon/Canvey: revision to late afternoon journeys from Southend.
	20	D	Southend to Hullbridge: minor revisions to timetable.
	21	D	Southend to Canvey: minor timetable changes.
	22	D	Canvey to Basildon: minor timetable changes.
	24	M-S	Southend to Temple Sutton: 0715 Mon to Fri journey advanced by 5 mins.
	25	D	Basildon to Southend: 0930 journey from Rawreth to Rayleigh withdrawn.
	26	D	Bournes Green to Canvey: minor timetable changes.
	27	D	Temple Sutton to Canvey: minor timetable changes.
	40	M-S	Chelmsford to Great Baddow: minor timetable changes.
	73/A	D	Warley to Bishop Hall Estate: a number of off peak journeys will serve Clements Park as service 73B.
	88	M-S	Colchester to Halstead: revised Mon to Fri timetable.
	100	D	Chelmsford to Lakeside: Sunday service extended to Chelmsford.
	200	M-S	Basildon to Grays: revised timetable on Saturdays journeys between Stanford-le-Hope and Grays reduced to hourly.
	351	D	Chelmsford to Warley: revised timetable service will be withdrawn between Brentwood and Warley.
	551	M-S	Basildon to Brentwood: minor timetable changes.
2 Apr 12	63	M-S	St Michaels to Colchester: additional Mon to Fri am journey introduced.



Recent TfL contract changes in Essex

Route 20 - Changed operator from Arriva London North to Go Ahead Blue Triangle on 24 March. Wright Gemini 2 Volvo's are used. The buses were delivered early and stored and carry their original booked 61 regs.

WVL462 is seen in High Road, Loughton on 24th March.



Route 370 - Now converted to double deck operation using Alexander DAFs transferred from Arriva Kent Thameside after being displaced from route 160 which now has new E400s. 6225 in South Ockendon on 24th March.



Route 462 - A route that only just operates into Essex (at Chigwell). Another tender loss from Arriva London North to Go Ahead Blue Triangle, using Wright Streetlites First of the batch, and the first of this type in Essex, WS1 was caught at Chigwell, Limes Farm Estate on 24th March.

All Russell Young

	75	M-S	Colchester to Maldon: 1500 schoolday journey from Colchester withdrawn.
	76	M-S	Colchester to Clacton: revised route on certain journeys and timetable. Certain journeys to bypass University of Essex.
5 Apr 12	X30	D	Stansted Airport to Southend: some journeys diverted via Southend Airport.
First London			
12 Mar 12	608	Sch	Gallows Corner to Shenfield School: revised timetable.
2 Apr 12	564	M-S	West Horndon to Grays: new service.
Fords Coaches			
29 Mar 12	2	Th	Tillingham to Southend: service withdrawn.
Go Ride			
13 May 12	11	Sat	Purfleet to Chadwell St Mary: new service.
Imperial Busways			
8 May 12	11	M-F	Purfleet to Basildon: revised route and timetable service extended to Basildon operating every 90 mins.
Olympus Bus & Coach			
19 Mar 12	741	M-F	London to Bishop Stortford: revision to route and timetable.
Regal Busways			
30 Apr 12	552	M-F	Billericay to Ramsden Heath: revised route and timetable with one morning and evening journey extended to/from Basildon Industrial Estates numbered 553. Minor changes to evening departure times from Billericay.
Roadrunner			
24 Feb 12	7/A	M-S	Bishop Stortford to Stansted Airport: service withdrawn. (corrected date)
TGM Group (Network Harlow)			
24 Feb 12	7/A	M-S	Bishop Stortford to Stansted Airport: new service. (corrected date)
Wyvern Community Transport			
1 May 12	SB71	MTh	Woodfield Road to Hadleigh: revised timetable to one return journey operating on Mondays, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Church Road section is withdrawn.

Paul Harvey
(acknowledgements to LOTS,
Essex & Hertfordshire County Council, Richard Delahoy & Harlowwide)

■ FIRST ESSEX BUSES LTD

New vehicles

The results of the Government's Green Bus Fund (Round 3) were announced on 23rd March, allocating £31m in subsidy towards 439 new hybrid and gas vehicles for use across the Country. Essex is due 29 hybrid diesel-electric buses as a result, 6 double deckers for *Ensign* and 23 single decks for *First Essex*. Manufacturers' announcements would suggest that 19 of the vehicles for *First Essex* will be Volvo 7900H integrals (with a further ten for *First Berkshire*) but confirmation of this is still awaited. The DfT press release indicates that the new buses are due to enter service 'by Spring 2013' and that an additional subsidy of 6p per kilometre will be available towards operating costs.

Acquired vehicles (March 2012)

41541 LK53FEF Transbus Dart SLF SFD2BACR33GW17185 Caetano B33F SCC4446/03
new 10/03
Ex *First Capital East Ltd*, originally B29D and new to Centrewest.

Allocation changes

These are, and always have been, taken from the Company's allocation sheet although these have been in several different formats over the last few months, hence changes in terminology. For operational reasons there may sometimes be discrepancies with the actual situation on the ground.

FG=to/from another First Group company (change of legal ownership);

RES=reserve; Sh=shuttle bus (non PCV)

The following traditional depot codes are used in EBN, although they no longer appear on the company's listings: BN-Basildon; BE-Braintree; CF-Chelmsford; CN-Clacton; CR-Colchester; DT-Harwich; HH-Hadleigh; D/L(D)-Disposal

February 2012

40734 CN-D/L(D) and sold; 41524 FG-BN; 41527 FG-BN; 41543 FG-BN; 41645 BN-D/L(D); 43442 BN-RES; 43743 RES-CN

March 2012

34333 CN-D/L(D) and sold; 40733 BE-RES; 41541 FG-BN; 41653 BN-D/L(D) and sold; 42852 HH-BE; 42855 HH-BE; 43484 BN-D/L(D); 43736 BN-HH; 43738 BN-HH

Following the closure of *First Eastern Counties'* Bury St Edmunds depot on 31st March, Darts 43449 (P449NEX) and 43482/5 (R682/5DPW) have been noted at work in Essex. Plaxton Primos 57001/2 meanwhile have left Clacton and were noted at *First Scotland East's* Larbert depot, although this is due to close soon.

Disposals

to Erith Commercials (for scrap): 41645 (28th Feb), 34333 (1st Mar), 41653 (22nd Mar)

Other changes

Please note that only 44518 has an allover rear advert (and none of 44516/7/9)
43679 has gained LED destination display.

Area News - workings and sightings

Route branding indicated [thus]



The (un)changing face of Clacton: a fine row of Victorian facades in Pier Avenue form a backdrop to a Primo-free scene: Dennis Lance/Plaxton Verde **67241** (M241 MRW) and Dart/Marshall Capital **41644** (R644 TLM). 20th March. *Ken Coldwell*

Clacton (CN) & Harwich (DT)

At the beginning of April, former FEC Dart 43449 and CF Solo 53138 arrived at CN to replace Primos 57001/2 (see above) although 57002 was in use at Harwich (working 22A/B) on 28th March. Lance 67241 strayed from Point Clear services and operated a number of Colchesters during the March (seen on 17.40 ex CR ser 74 on 7th and 18.10 ser 76 on 12th). Lance 67003 unusually operated service 5 on 19th, a working which finishes with the 18.10 service 76 to CR returning 19.05.

Vehicles parked up at CN as at 1st April were Olympians 34282 and 34309, Volvo trainer 60321, cannibalised Scania 65524 and stored Lances 60102, 67004/5/8/9. Trident 32804 was awaiting a replacement engine and rear axle while 32847 was being fitted with a replacement engine. Previously defective Dart 43743 returned to service on 13th February.

On 20th March, Olympian 34610 (K610LAE) operated the 10.40 Clacton to Harwich service 4 and 11.40 return service 3 after Dart/Enviro 44517 developed mechanical problems in Clacton.

Colchester (CR)

March

- 11th CR32478 [61/62] on 68.
- 12th CR32477 [61/62] on 64;
- 16th CR62406 seen running light at Spring Lane roundabout, westbound at approx 09.00.
- 20th CR34018 on 65, CR34056 on 62
- 22nd CR32475 [61/62] on 64.

24th CR32481 [61/62] on 65.

Chelmsford (CF) and Braintree (BE)

From 12th to 16th March, Rickstones Road in Rivenhall due to be closed for works between 07.00 and 17.00. In fact work was completed on 14th. During this time services 131/2 were unable to serve Rivenhall and stops south of Silver End Church, along Western Road (Silver End), Park Road and Church Road (Rivenhall). Normal 131/2s were diverted via Temple Lane and B1018 Witham Road, with a replacement shuttle provided initially by Dart/East Lancs 42852 (transferred from HH) but very quickly replaced by MPD 43360 which was a more appropriate size.

Operation of 351 reverted to CF depot with effect from 2nd April and 43445/8 appear to have transferred with it. Naturally other vehicles from CF have appeared on it.

March

- 7th BE 53701, BE66179 and BE 66809 on 131/132
- 8th CF42933 on H2
- 10th CF66794 on X30 (and 20th/24th)
- 11th CF66814 on 42A
- 12th CF42918 on 71X (usually Scania Omnicity), BE66179 on 132
- 13th CF65626 on 71
- 14th BE30888 on 131, CF42934 on 71A, CF65626 on 71
- 15th CF34284 seen running light on Southway, CR westbound at approx 09.30; BE42486 on 131/2 shuttle; CF65626 on 71
- 16th BE43360 on 131/2 (and 19th, 20th and 21st), CF42921 on 71
- 28th Olympian CF34286 on 36 (10.50 CD-SW and 11.39 return)
- 29th CF65031 on 15.45 CD-BE 70, 42855 (ex HH) on 51, CF53134 on 542
- 30th BE40733 out of use, 42855 on 54/56, CF34284 on 36, CF34286 on 542, BE42484 on 70
- 31st 42855 on 54, CF34284 and CF65029 on 42

April

- 2nd 43482/5 noted in use (ex FEC) – 43485 on 54; BE42489 and CF65626 on 42
- 3rd 43445/8 (ex BN) on 351, 43482 on 51, 43485 on 45 and 54/46
- 4th 43445 on 71A, 43485 on 351, step Dart 46158 on 51
- 5th 42857 on 132 (presume moved HH-BE), CF42933 on 351, 46158 on 45

Basildon (BN) & Hadleigh (HH)

March

- 12th HH41741 on 2
- 14th Olympians BN34301 on 25 and BN34314 on 200; BN46440 on 351
- 19th Caetano Dart BN41527 on 73A
- 22nd MPD BN42551 on 25
- 23rd Caetano BN41543 and MPD BN43847 on 5
- 24th BN34012 on Billericay-Chelmsford rail replacement
- 25th BN41251 on 100
- 31st Olympians BN31462, BN34314/5 all on 200; BN34011 on 25 and BN34301 on 25B. 34310 in BN depot (probably for MOT)

Other News

Bristol FLF6LX 2917 (AEV811F), long time Wood Green resident and one time regular star of 'On the Buses', moved recently from California for a new life as a fish and chip stall ("The Godfather") with Lonnie & Haylee Haas of Bend, Oregon, USA. It was converted (very basically) to open top and fitted with a (UK) offside door many years ago.

Olympian 34812 (C412HJN) was noted in Newcastle under Lyme, Staffs on 2nd April wearing a black livery and in non-PSV use.

Sources: Own observations, with many thanks to *First Essex* and to S Austin, A Bird, G Butler, N Clark, T Clark, J Collins, D Edwards, M Farmer, D Flatman, F406LTW, J Long, K Mead, J Podgorski, D Pretty, I Ransom, J Salmon, C Sigston, 'Solo', A Spindler, A Toms, R West, the *Essex, East Anglia and British Buses in North America* yahoo! groups, *Essex Buses* Google group, www.bustlistsontheweb.co.uk, *Real Bus News*, LOTS, PSV Circle and 'Terminus'.

Reports relating to First Group may be sent by text on 07973 509459, by e-mail to shenfield252@gmail.com or by conventional post. Many thanks to all who do so.

Chris Stewart

Arriva

■ ARRIVA SOUTHEND LTD

All 12 Optare Versas have received names with a Southend connection. The names were chosen from a competition run by Arriva in association with local radio station Heart Essex.

4201 Kursaal Flyer	4205 Peggy Mount	4209 Carvair
4202 Procol Harum	4206 Martin from Heart	4210 James Bourne
4203 Su from Heart	4207 William Bradley	4211 Dominic Littlewood
4204 Jamie Oliver	4208 Russell Kane	4212 Ekco

The names are carried in the nearside quarterlight window ahead of the door. Eastwoodbury Crescent was closed to Southend bound traffic outside Southend Airport from 12 March for two weeks. Service 9 was diverted Southend bound from the eastern end of Eastwoodbury Lane via the southern half of Eastwoodbury Crescent and then north along Rochford Road, resuming normal route at the Harp House (Warners Bridge) roundabout.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Essex bus y-group

TGM Group

■ NETWORK HARLOW

Most of the fleet has lost the Arriva fleetname, although Dart SLF 3230 has escaped the scraper so far. Harlow Garage has now been fitted with large blue 'Network Harlow' boards.

Ex-Link Line Dart SLF Caetano Nimbus RX07 KPJ, HX04HUH and HX04HUK have arrived and entered service in all over white livery with paper route numbers stuck inside the windscreens.

Leyland Olympians 239/40 (EBN575) were very short term loans, however the other three double deckers, Scania N113/East Lancs 261/2 and Volvo B10M/Northern Counties 243, remain in active service.



The (un)changing face of Harlow: *above:* The former London Transport, London Country Bus Services, London Country North East, County Bus & Coach and Arriva East Herts & Essex Harlow depot (HA) still stands and has now gained signage for the present incumbent, **Network Harlow** (TGM Group). An elderly, new to Luton & District Olympian lurks in the yard. *below:* Acquired by **Roadrunner**, Dart/Plaxton **V729 DNL** seems reluctant to sever ties with its former owner as it operated for a while with this 'destination'. To the rear, another Dart in its former owner's colours is **Regal R507 SJM** which joins sister 510, also from NIBS. *both: Owen Woodliffe*



A Versa was noted twice during the week of 12th March unusually operating route 10 to Church Langley.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to John Podgorski, Owen Woodliffe and HarlowRide

Hedingham

Sightings/unusual workings

L296 M441 CVG B6/Pointer CN on Honeywood schools pm – usually KN working 19 March. L211 M212 WHJ Lance SLF/Wright HD on Honeywood schools pm 22/3 March. L160 H160 HJN Olympian/Alexander – at CN for repairs 20 March. Seen back at work back at TY on 28 March.

General

L84 is at TY in preparation for MOT on 5th April.

Currently the legal lettering on existing vehicles remains unchanged but during future repaints it will be modified to remove reference to Mr D R MacGregor.

It has been noted that coaches L295, L309 and L347 are devoid of rear luggage boot lid HO vinyls and any form of depot allocation reference or contact numbers or e-mail address. It is understood that these are supplied via a local supplier and applied post-paint. However, these are currently awaited.

with thanks to Essex-buses yahoo bus group, Dave Arnold & Jim Embrey

Ensignbus

■ DEALER STOCK MOVEMENTS

Vehicles in

Arriva Southern Counties	P199LKJ	Dart SLF ex 3199
Astons Coaches	YX09HZF	Enviro 200
	FJ55YCF/H/E/XBB	Volvo B12Bs Sunsundegui Sideral (YCF/H/E ex Irish reg 05-G-10420/2/1)
Bluebird, Manchester	MA02BLU MB02BLU	Dart Caetano Nimbus
Go-Ahead Metrobus	R743BMY/R746FGX/	Dart SLF Plax ex 243/246 and T309SMV Alexander 200 ex 309
Little's Transport	MX04VLV	Solo ex B04
London United	T336/7/9/40/1/8/53/	Dart SLF ex DP36/7/9/40/1/8/ 8/63/5/7/8/71PRH 53/8/63/5/7/8/71
OTT	E754UKR	Metrobus
Stagecoach East Midlands	P821/823FVU	Volvo B10M's Alexander PS ex P559ESA /P660ESO20821/3/559/60

Stagecoach London	V162/3MVX Y262/71/94-6/ 332/4/44/51/74FJN LX51 FFW/FGU/FHB/ A/K/L/J P123/125 XCN P843GND	Dart SLF ex 341162/3 Dart SLF Alexander 200 (ex 34262/71/94-6/332/4/44/ 255/340) (ex 34290/315/8/9/24)
Stagecoach North East		Volvo B10Ms Alexander PS (ex 20123/5 and 20843)
Vehicles out		
Astons Transport, Worcester	GHZ8754	Javelin Plaxton Premiere ex Tates Travel
Avondale, Glasgow	Y805/967/69/73-4/ 77/84/8TGH	Dart SLF ex LDP150/67/9/73/4/ 7/84/8
A&P Brown, Barway, Cambs	W386PRC	Volvo B10M Excalibur
Cavendish, Tonypany	FJ55YCE	Volvo B12B Sunsundegui Sideral ex Astons
Centrebus	YN04LWU MX04VLV Y968/72/6/8TGH	Solo Solo Dart ex LDP168/72/6/8
Eastonways, Ramsgate	W468BCW V140/44MEV	B7TL President ex Roadrunner Trident Alex 400 ex Stagecoach 17140/4
Gillingham, Stanley, Co Durham	FJ55XBB	Volvo B12B Sunsundegui Sideral ex Astons
Gibson Direct, Glasgow	M684TDB	Dragon ex Stagecoach 15184
Golden Tours, London	V474KJN	Trident Alexander 400 ex East London 17100
Littles Coaches, Ilkeston	V427/431DRA	Tridents East Lancs ex Nottingham 427/31
New Adventure, Cardiff	FJ55YCF/YCH	Volvo B12Bs Sunsundegui Sideral ex Astons
Regal Busways, Chelmsford	X298/312NNO	Trident Alexander 400 ex Selkent 17298/312
Regent Coaches, Whitstable	FN06FLL	Primo ex West End Travel.
Roadrunner Coaches, Harlow	YN05ARX	Iveco Indicar CC100E ex Veolia 78001
Shelton Motors, Cambs	P843GND/M606VHE/ P123XCN/L343KCK V314GLB	Volvo B10Ms Alexander PS (ex Stagecoach 20843/20496/20123/20443) Trident Alexander 400 ex Metroliner TA114
Silcox, Pembroke Dock	S113EGK S638JGP	Dart SLF ex Go Ahead LDP113 Dart SLF ex Metrobus 388
Simmonds Coaches, Diss	TRM144	Volvo B10M Van Hool ex Stagecoach 52049
S&M, Benfleet, Essex	T49KLD P92URG	Dart Plaxton SLF ex Metroliner DLD109 Volvo B10M-62 Plaxton Expressliner
Stephensons Coaches,		

Easingwold
Sullivan Buses, South Mimms
Z&S, Aylesbury

V187/190ERG
LY02OAX
AE57CNK

Dart MPD ex Go Ahead NE 487/90
Trident Alex 400 ex East London
Ex Veolia Evolution 5705

Other movements

Solo
Trident
Primos
Dart

CN04NFM
V423DRC
AU07AFO / CN07FSJ
Y536XAG

Bedford Borough Council
Longleat Safari Park, Wilts
Mike Lawrenson, Preston
City Direct, Galway, Eire

With thanks to Ross Newman

■ ENSIGN BUS CO. LTD.

The ex Dublin hybrid Wright Pulsar Gemini double decker is in service with UK cherished plate PIJ 601, fleet number 501. A different livery is applied to this vehicle, although not too different! (See front cover!)

New to Dublin Bus as WH1 (08-D-69001), the Wright Pulsar Gemini HEV with a VDL DB250 glider chassis (without engine) has Siemens ELFA traction components, a Siemens series hybrid drivetrain with power supplied by a Ford 2.4 litre diesel engine and lithium-ion batteries. It was originally fitted with a Puma 1.9 litre engine but has since been upgraded.

The bus normally runs on the batteries, which are kept charged as required by the diesel



Ensignbus Chairman, Peter Newman, Jackie Doyle-Price, MP for Thurrock and Steve Beverley, Sustainable Travel Manager for Capital Shopping Centres (parent company of Lakeside) plus representatives of Lakeside Shopping Centre at the launch.

Bus & Coach Buyer

engine automatically cutting-in, and also by regenerative braking.

This is the first hybrid bus in service in Essex/Thurrock and will be followed by six new Volvo B5LH/Wrightbus Gemini hybrids, funded under Round 3 of the Department for Transport's Green Bus Fund.

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Ex Nottingham Trident East Lancs W656 SNN and V434/5 DRA were in the Ensign paint shop being prepared to enter into the fleet as 156/134 /5 but a change of plan saw these buses sold instead.

*With thanks to Ross Newman and Paul Dickson*

## **Roadrunner / Olympus**

Former Go Ahead North East Dart / Plaxtons V195/6/8/9 ERG and V729 DNL have been acquired via Ensign Bus, together with similar S117 EGK, Y907/971 TGH from Go Ahead London. Also acquired is Dart / Plaxton R447 LGH from Travel with Hunny. Dart BU05 HDO is now in fleet livery ex-red.

Disposals include Volvo B6s, P713 BTA and P355 JND for scrap, and Volvo B7TLs W468/473 BCW and MANs RX53 LFH/LNH to Ensign Bus. Volvo B6s P704/5/109 BTA are also said to have gone to Ensign but are not listed by them. One B6, P328 JND remains in stock.

*LOTS*



**National Express:** The daily Ipswich to London 481 (**Your Bus**, Heanor Volvo B9R/Caetano Levante **FJ11 MOA**) picks its way carefully through Shenfield on Sunday 25th March as the Brentwood Half Marathon/Fun Run participants fill the road going the other way. *Chris Stewart*



## Regal Busways

The trio of Dennis Trident/ Alexander nos. 1301/2/3 are all now single door and are in new style Regal colours - 1303 has bus seats, 1301/1302 have high back seats with belts. 1302/3 have been noted on evening commuter journeys of route 552 (Billericay - Ramsden Heath).

Olympian 1202 is being used for spares, whilst 1205 is out of use. Lynx 102 still awaits a new engine and 104 is out of use. Dart/Plaxton W133 WGT is numbered 605 and retains centre door (unused) and all-red former Metroliner livery. W136 WGT has returned from conversion to single door and is still in red with blue skirt livery, fleet no. not yet allocated.

*Owen Woodliffe*

## Stephensons of Essex



**On loan:** an ADL Enviro 200 demonstrator, YX61 DOU, was been on loan since around March 5th and was due to go back around the time this issue was finalised. It was covering whilst 431-4 were undergoing warranty repairs and was normally used on service 90. (See inside front cover).

Scania/East Lancs 505 has received an unusual rear adornment - a larger than life-sized picture of driver Trevor Owen, to celebrate his achievement in being voted the UK's Bus Driver of the Year in the UK Bus Awards!

*Richard Delahoy*

## Community Bus Operators

**Brentwood Community Transport:** a timetable has been published for the 228 Sunday Link route due to start on 6th May. There are four circular journeys: Doddinghurst - Brentwood Leisure Centre - Sainsburys - High Street - Railway Station - The Drive, Warley Hill - Thorndon Country Park - Herongate, Church, and return via same route to Doddinghurst.

**Go-Ride CIC, Thurrock:** The Saturday trips on the Thurrock Council 11 (Purfleet -

Chadwell St Mary) are taken over from Imperial from 13th May.

*Chris Stewart, David Harman*

## **Crusader**

The dispersal of the fleet is as follows:

Motts: 1 - EU08 FAA, 2 - EU08 FAJ, 3 - EU08 FAF, 4 - EU07 FHZ, 5 - EU07 FHY,  
6 - EU07 FHX, 7 - EU06 JBX. At this stage it is not known if the fleet numbers are  
being carried on the coaches

Isle of Wight Tours: EU07 FHW (unconfirmed).

Unsold; still with Wyles Hardy: EU06 JBO, EU06 JBV.

*Paul Smith*

## **Help !**



**Classic architecture**(well, two of 'em, anyway): Luke Deal's preserved former Eastern National Bristol VR 3072 (KOO 790V) and First Essex Trident 32809 (T809 LLC) frame the Harwich High Lighthouse on a sparkling Spring day.

But Luke needs help, specifically a new (secondhand), clean scroll for 3072. The technical spec is: 31" wide, with dayglo yellow on black lettering, with destinations for Colchester and north Essex (CR and/or CR depot blind would be ideal).

If you can help or point Luke in the right direction (he knows Messrs McKenna's can supply a super new blind as a last resort), please email him on:

**deally53@yahoo.co.uk** or call / text him on **0794 121 5223**

Ta in advance!



## Sixty Years in Basildon

The New Towns Act of 1946 led to the creation of eight self-sufficient communities around London (and a handful elsewhere in the country) to alleviate the pressures on existing urban settlements, many of which had suffered considerable loss of housing and other facilities during World War II bombing. Basildon was designated as such in 1949, but was unique in that local politicians had lobbied for it to be built where it was (rather than the initially preferred Chipping Ongar) so that it could also deal with what was described in Parliament at the time as a 'rural slum' – 78 miles of unmade roads serving hundred of 'plotlands' bungalows and other sub-standard housing with only limited facilities and services. The 'direct' line of the London, Tilbury & Southend Railway had given Laindon and Pitsea railway stations in the 1880s at the same time as large tracts of South Essex farmland were being bought by

property speculators as agriculture collapsed after a series of poor summers. Pre-eminent amongst these was The Land Company, formed by Frederick Francis Ramuz (later Mayor of Southend), who ran regular weekend trips for Londoners, tempted into buying individual plots of land by free train tickets and hospitality. Many of these sites were never developed and others were only ever occupied at weekends, roads remained unadopted by the local authority and basic facilities were generally lacking, but for the permanent residents Hinton's 'Laindon & District' buses (running mainly to Pipp's Hill, but also to Billericay, Brentwood and Romford) were established in the early 1920s. Hinton sold out to Webster ('Old Tom'), whose business was in turn one of several small operators acquired by the City Coach Company.

Pitsea to the east was home to Campbell's,



Hinton's 'Laindon and District' operated former London 'B' types as seen here (the further one being B214). Note the advertising for Hillview Estate bungalows at £50 down.

*EBEG collection*

whose works services to and from the oil refineries at what is now Coryton started during the First World War, with a network of local services developing from 1921/22. Eastern National and Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services ran longer distance services from Southend, Grays, Romford and Chelmsford.

Services in Harlow, developed under the same Act of Parliament, were provided by London Transport's Country Area buses and Green Line coaches (as indeed were most of the other 'first generation' New Towns close to London). Not so in Basildon, which became firmly Eastern National territory, certainly after 1952 when they took over responsibility for Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services, to whom City Coach Company had sold out shortly beforehand. The only impact LT had on Basildon was indirect - the transfer to it of EN's Grays depot on 30 September 1951 along with 28 vehicles prompted Eastern National to house three vehicles in Basildon. These were required for an early departure on the 40 to Brentwood and for

short workings on the 53 (the 51, although shown as Harwich to Tilbury – a route run partly for the benefit of Trinity House pilots - did not in fact work south of Colchester). The Grays vehicles were returned to EN in January 1952 but meanwhile the EN board had, at its meeting on 18 September 1951, approved the purchase of freehold land and buildings in Bull Road, Vange from R J Greaves of Pitsea for the sum of £3,250. This former builders' merchants was located close to Gale's Corner, where the present day Clay Hill Road meets Timberlog Lane (at a re-modelled junction) just south of the railway bridge. Bull Road ran west from this point and Timberlog Lane continued south to 'The Barge' P.H. Where the local shopping complex now stands was another pub, 'The Bull', and alongside this was the yard and covered building bought by EN. Gale's was a prominent local store, adjacent to which was Vange Post Office.

Contracts had been exchanged before the end of 1951 but it was January 1952 before the



Not long after opening, Frank Church recorded Bull Road depot in Vange during February 1952. A Bristol L5G lurks in the shadows behind the timber office structure.





On Christmas Day 1958, John Rugg was passing Bull Road with his camera and captured former Westcliff LS6G coach 376 (FJN 169) parked up along with various half cab Bristols.

depot was operational, with a timber office building added to the front. The earliest vehicle allocation is not known, nor are the arrangements between September 1951 and the opening of Bull Road depot, but by November 1953 the three vehicles had already become eight. The New Town developed rapidly from 1951, 600 new houses having been built by the end of 1952. From perhaps 13,000 residents in 1931 the figure had reached 47,000 by 1959 and has continued to grow to about 120,000 today. The first town service began on 14 February 1954, this being route 44 (later 244) between Pitsea Station and Whitmore Way (The Fremnells), this latter terminal moving every few months as more new housing was built and eventually reaching the Town Centre on 4 May 1958. Until that time, the link to Pitsea was essential for the station, shops and market. The 44 was licenced to Westcliff but the only known early photograph shows an EN Bedford OB bus on it and, as Vange (Basildon) was an EN depot, everything indicates that EN worked it from the outset.

Such was the pace of change that by September 1954 Basildon (now identified by a yellow circle and part of the Southend area) had an allocation of 21 vehicles, including two ex City OBs and former Westcliff K5G as well as two Dennis Lancet coaches acquired with the business (including the Basildon excursion licences) of Gidea Park Coaches, who had in turn inherited these from Webster ('Old Tom') of Laindon.

Pressure to house more vehicles after EN took over Campbell's of Pitsea in February 1956 led to an agreement with brewers Mann, Crossman & Paulin Ltd to rent an area of orchard and scrubland at the very rear of the 'The Bull' P.H. alongside and to clear it so it could be used for vehicle parking. Terms were agreed in April 1956 with a commencement date of October that year but there matters became complicated. Things were eventually resolved and a further area of railway land leased from the BTC starting October 1957.

Continuing development of Basildon, including the opening of the main Town Centre and Bus Station in 1958, coincided with agreement that the Bull Road premises would ultimately be sold to Basildon Development Corporation for redevelopment although it continued to serve until Easter 1961. Many more services started around this time - in 1958, the 244 was extended to form a cross town link between Pitsea and Laindon while former City routes to Laindon were extended to Basildon and operated from the latter (as was Billericay's town service), rather than Brentwood depot as previously. The final development at Vange was the renting as a temporary office of a bungalow at 125 Timberlog Lane, just south of Gale's Corner and adjacent to Vange Post Office, from the Development Corporation who had already acquired it for redevelopment. EN's use took effect from 9 January 1959, the building having last been occupied as a dwelling in 1957, the installation of power

and light being accompanied by what Company records refer to as a "blitz" to make it presentable. 'Window frames' (obviously advertising displays) were brought from Jackson Road, Clacton. Temporary planning permission was initially granted for office use expiring 31 December 1959 and then renewed for a further 12 months, the property being vacated on 1 January 1961 and demolished soon afterwards as part of road re-alignment in the vicinity. Interesting trivia is that the excessive use of former Tillings heaters prompted an internal memorandum on the topic at one point, whilst files show debates about the possible use of converted buses as offices if Cherrydown opened before such facilities were available. Further somewhat fraught discussion ensued regarding the likely lack of a canteen at Cherrydown in the early stages of its operation and the possible alternative arrangements to satisfy the staff representatives (including the use of

The hastily-cleared unsurfaced yard seen here playing host to Bristol KSW5G 1353 (SHK 518) shows the urgency with which additional parking land at Bull Road was brought into use once acquired. The bus carries a pre-1958 depot code (yellow circle) and has worked the 242, which was introduced to run from The Fremnells to Coryton via Pitsea in 1955.

*EBEG collection*







Bristol LWL5G 352 (TTW 571) graphically displays the transition from open fields to New Town as it crosses what is now Upper Mayne in 1959. *John Rugg*

The bungalow at 125 Timberlog Lane, typical 1930s timber framed with asbestos cement roofing slates, was photographed by Frank Church in May 1959.



Littlewood's restaurant until it was pointed out the unavailability of that 'out of hours').

Back to Vange depot, and by July 1959 it had a total allocation of 41 vehicles (see below) which included an interesting mix, all but one being Bristol/ECW – the exception was ex United Counties and Queen's Park Coaches Leyland PS1 014. Note the predominance of the 5 cylinder Gardner engine, with a handful of 6 cylinder Bristols and Gardners together with one 4LK engined SC. A number of contracts were operated within the New Town as well as stage services, particularly with the opening of more factories and major employers, as well as what were clearly lucrative excursions, private hire, extended tours and an increasing number of Express Services all requiring coaches.

Basildon (Bull Road, Vange) allocations

November 1953 (Yellow Circle) - 8

JO5G 3724 (FNO 797)

K5G 3893 (KNO 597)

L5G 3912 (KNO 615)

Bedford OB bus 3928 (LPU 618)

L6B coach 4101/7 (PTW 104/10)

KSW5G 4120/36 (SHK 513/8)

It was all change in Basildon at Easter 1961 when the new purpose-built depot and offices opened at Cherrydown, just south the railway line in the town centre, and the allocation had reached 61 vehicles. Bull Road depot was soon flattened along with the adjacent pub, the road junction was realigned and shops built together with a replacement pub (itself since demolished). On 5th April 1961, the Assistant General Manager sent the Assistant Engineer (Southend) a 'private and confidential' package containing "the last remains of Bull Road depot" - one can only guess at which artefact was saved for



The tours and excursion business was a lucrative part of Eastern National's operations and a number of operators were acquired for their licences. Amongst these was Gidea Park Coaches, successor to Webster ('Old Tom') of Laindon, whose Dennis Lancet OEV 817 became EN 139 and was among the earliest allocation at Vange. Quite why it was in Chelmsford Bus Station displaying "Tilbury Ferry" is uncertain. *Chris Stewart collection*





Basildon Bus Station, with its well known mosaic frontage, had been altered to its current saw-tooth arrangement some years before the arrival of the ubiquitous Leyland National, six of which are seen here with one solitary Bristol VR for company. Further, more recent, changes have seen the frontage enclosed with glass.

*ENOC collection, courtesy Geoff Dodson*



Preserved MW6G bus 1356 (MOO 177), one of three re-engined from MW5Gs in the 1970s, pauses outside Wickford Police Station on 9 Oct 2011. This would have been the site of EN's new Wickford depot in the late 1930s had proposals gone ahead.

*Chris Stewart, with thanks to David Bateman*

historical reasons (unless of course any reader knows!). Meantime much correspondence also ensued over the gas meter from Bull Road, which had gone missing in the haste to demolish the building and which as a result cost EN just over £12 by way of payment in lieu to the Gas Board.

Cherrydown depot was designed 'in house' by A A Briggs ARIBA, Architect to the Tilling Association and the main contractors on the 6,000 square yard site were Hosking & Son (Essex) Ltd. Much was made at the time of opening of the recirculation system in the Widney bus wash to conserve water. Initial staff complement was 216 (including 88 drivers and 86 conductors) who also had use of a modern canteen although again it is not clear whether this was available from the outset. It is possible that an interim arrangement involved re-use of the canteen building from Vange. Over 50 years on, Cherrydown depot continues to serve First

Essex although it is some years since the last Bristol/ECW vehicles (VRs) were to be seen. The current allocation is 69 vehicles, only a handful of which are double deckers. In the intervening period, the yard area has expanded three times (first to the side in 1964, again on that side and to the rear in the 1970s) while the depot building itself has also been rebuilt. The biggest change is that the covered area is now purely for maintenance with all vehicle entry from the yard and not from Cherrydown itself as was originally the case. Eastern National's monopoly of local services has been diluted, with Nelsons (NIBS) notably having operated to Pitsea and North Benfleet ever since Deregulation in 1986.

Had it not been for Basildon New Town, however, things would have been very different.

Patten's of Ramsden Heath were acquired by



Pattens acquired this 1931 former demonstrator all-Dennis Dart and it passed to ENOC in 1934 as no.3527, but was withdrawn in 1938. Little did they know that the 'Dennis Dart' was to make a major resurgence in the 1990s! *Martin Weyell collection*





An earlier vehicle of 'Wickford Omnibus' is seen passing through Tindal Square, Chelmsford in this commercial postcard. *Martin Weyell collection*

ENOC in September 1934, having developed the Wickford to Chelmsford route started by C W Spurling (t/a The Wickford Carriage Co Ltd) in September 1928. Spurling also ran to Tilbury and Maldon, the latter route being acquired by Quest (Gozzett) and in turn becoming ENOC 63 on takeover of that firm. The Tilbury route was abandoned but May 1931 saw the Wickford Omnibus Co Ltd (as it had become) being acquired by father and son Pattens who had begun in competition in 1929. The former EN (and National) route 4 to Billericay was amalgamated with Patten's service to become the 34 and extended to Downham. It was re-routed via Nevendon Road to Basildon in June 1962 and the Wickford-Pitsea section became the 231. With the major upheaval of April 1964 the Chelmsford to Billericay section became part of the 53/153 (later 152/154 and nowadays the 100).

Back to Wickford, and EN bought a piece of land in London Road on 19th May 1937 with

a view to building a new depot. Patten's had premises in Runwell Road but the new site was presumably larger, with 148ft frontage widening to 167ft at the rear. Consent was obtained from Essex CC under the Restriction on Ribbon Development Act 1935 subject to planning permission from Billericay UDC, but there the file goes silent. A letter from EN to the Tilling Group architect H J Starkey set out a list of contractors who had been asked to tender but a letter of 12th December 1937 simply says that "in view of the present position the Chairman agreed that this matter should be put in abeyance". One can only surmise that Billericay UDC would not grant consent, as other development was taking place throughout the Company at that time and indeed up to the early years of World War II. Meanwhile Pattens' premises in Runwell Road are recorded as remaining in use until 1939.

The London Road site was used as allotments during the War. From 1948 onwards, various



Pattens' Dennis Lancet EV 6784 of 1932 passed to Eastern National as fleet number 3530, was withdrawn 1941 (possibly requisitioned) and re-surfaced after WW2 with Gilbert of Tunbridge Wells, re-registered JKN 685. It is seen here outside the 'Swan' PH in Wickford Broadway. *J F Higham, courtesy Martin Weyell*

enquiries from potential purchasers were all turned away, the book value of the site as at 31st December 1951 of £1,489 4s 5d clearly being well above market value for houses. This was to have an unexpected financial reward, though – eventually, in September 1959 the site was zoned for a Police Station but even then EN, advised by King & Co of London (surveyors to the Tilling group), were not about to roll over with delight at the offer of £3,000 from Essex CC. A formal appeal by King & Co to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government established an alternative use for valuation purposes of six shops and six flats, as a result of which a settlement was eventually reached in June 1962 at £9,500. So ended the story of what would presumably have been 'WD' depot.

*Chris Stewart, with acknowledgement and thanks  
to John Rugg, Alan Osborne, Martin Weyell,  
Terry Clark, the PSV Circle  
and Essex Record Office*

Sept 1954 - 21

Dennis Lancet coaches 139/40 (OEV 817,  
PTW 641, ex Gidea Park Coaches in 7/54)  
Beadle-Bedford 163 (NVX 525)  
Bedford OB bus 178/9 (KTW 239/42 ex  
City), 187/9 (LPU 616/8)  
JO5G 264 (FNO 797)  
L5G 276/81/6/92/4/5 (GPU 434, KNO  
608/15/22, MPU 26/7)  
L6B 325 (PTW 104)  
LL5G 330 (ONO 997)  
LS6G coach 375 (FJN 168)  
K5G 1326, 1332 (DHJ 612, ONO 65) (1326 is K6B  
KSW5G 1352/3 (SHK 513/8)

July 1959 (BN) - 41

L6B coach 007/8 (EBD 238/9)  
Leyland PS1 coach 014 (KKX 408)  
L5G 281/6/91-3/5, 301 (KNO 608/15/20/  
2/5, NNO 108)  
LL5G 330/7 (ONO 997, RHK 133)  
LWL5G 344/5/52 (EJN 633/4, TTW 571)  
LS6G coach 375/6 (FJN 168/9)





Nelsons (NIBS) of Wickford were quick to gain ground at Deregulation in 1986 and still operate a number of services over 25 years on. They ran a number of Bristol REs and ex London Daimler Fleetlines for some years, former Western National TUO 260J here passing one time LT DM1803. *Richard Delahoy*

London Road, Wickford is no longer served by modern day First Essex stage services (these being the preserve of NIBS) but the frequent 25 group traverses Nevendon Road. Olympian/Northern Counties 34011 (P551 EFL) heads out of town, just around the corner from the intended depot site, on 3rd September 2010. *Chris Stewart*



LS5G 409 (29 ENO)  
 SC4LK 446 (612 JPU)  
 MW6G coach 459 (7018 HK)  
 MW5G saloon 477/80 (214/7 MHK)  
 K5G 1252/68/78/9, 1305-7/17/32/41 (JN  
 9540, AJN 824, KNO 442, KNO 596,

CJN 321/2, DHJ 21, NNO 105,  
 ONO 65/78)  
 KSW5G 1352/3/8 (SHK 513/8/26)  
 LD5G 1458/67/88, 1516/8/46 (561 CTW,  
 971 DHK, 436 FEV, 298 JHK, 76  
 JNO, 352 LPU)



Beyond the limits of Basildon New Town, the historic village of Fobbing has been served by various operators working the Thurrock Council contracted 374, linking Basildon with Stanford le Hope and Grays. On 8th December 2011, Dart/Alexander 781 (LX51 FGD) heads through Fobbing, the last month of operation by Ensign before Go Ride CIC took over a revised 373/374 tender in January 2012. *Chris Stewart*

*rear cover*

### *At work and play in the evening*

*upper*

**Regal Busways** have acquired two ex-London Tridents and on 28th March, smartly-repainted 1302 (X312 NNO) was on the 552 commuter service to Ramsden Heath at Billericay Station. *Kevin Smith*

*lower*

The seafront roadway between the Kursaal and the Pier has been narrowed to a single carriageway and the promenade upgraded as part of the controversial "City Beach" scheme. The iconic dome of the Kursaal can be seen behind **Linkfast's** Olympian on the 1800 ex Southend. The evening sun casts long shadows and the trippers have headed home for the day. *Richard Delahoy*





In EBN 575, we overlooked the last open-top Southend open top service, which was rather splendidly run by **SBC Leisure** with former Scania OmniDekka demonstrator **B16 YBC** as "The Big Yellow Bus" (alas, with big yellow hard plastic seats). Here seen on 5 August 2006.

2012: Smartly-painted Cummins Leyland Olympian/NCME **G551 VBB** worked the new Linkfast service on the first day, 2nd April. *both: John G Lidstone*





