

Essex Bus News

Issue 686

June 2021



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



fb.me/essexbus





Above: Seen in Burnham-on-Crouch on 22 April 2021, laying over at the Clock Tower between trips on the D4 to Bradwell-on-Sea is Arrow Taxis / Essex Dart ARO8 BUS with fleet name 'Arrow Dengie Dart'. It is a VW Crafter CR50 with a VDL Kusters low-floor conversion, 16 seats. The D4 runs to a fixed timetable although Essex CC publicity suggests journeys need to be booked in advance.
Richard Delahoy. Our 'Colour Archive' feature on the inside rear cover features a much earlier route D.

Front Cover

Vehicles from First Essex, Arriva in Essex and Hedingham / Chambers not in the predominant livery of these operators are listed on pages 6 to 8. One such is Hedingham's Scania OmniCity 460, YN05 HFF, in an overall advert for 'Greatest Hits Radio', seen on Walton-on-the-Naze seafront on route 97 on 12 May 2021. **David Moth**

Inside Front Cover

Top: As reported on page 24, M&M Staffing's MM18 BUS, a Neoplan Tourliner, has been converted to full PSVAR specification. A new door has been fitted immediately behind the feature pillar, over the front wheel arch, with a cassette lift in a shallow locker above the front wheel. A door button is visible just above the side destination box. It is seen entering Newbury Park Underground Station car park on Greater Anglia Rail Replacement on 8 May 2021. **David Bell.**

Bottom: 686 for EBN 686. 1200 (BNO 686T) outside Harwich depot in September 1978. A Bedford YMT / Duple Dominant II DP53F new two months earlier. Working on Harwich - Colchester 103 instead of one of Harwich's Leyland Nationals. Alongside is Leyland National 1761 (MAR 783P) on route 117 which was a Parkeston Quay - Harwich service. Both vehicles allocated to Harwich with DT depot plates. **Robert Appleton**

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Please contact Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road, Chingford
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Owen stocks a wide range of colour photos, please send an SAE for details.

Subscriptions

A calendar year subscription is £22. New members may join from any month, but subscriptions will always run to December from whichever month the member chooses. Those joining from February to December inclusive will pay a pro-rata subscription calculated at £2 per month. For example, a member joining in March would pay 10 x £2, i.e., £20. Please contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road, Southend-on-Sea SS1 3TT
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Membership Records & Data Protection

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

Reports, Articles & Photographs

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

Printed by

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

Target Dates for EBM 687

Reports to Sub-Editors	3 July
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	9 July
Dispatch by Printers	on or before 19 July

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 10th and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the next month.

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

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Group Notices

Welcome to New Members

Rob McCaffery, Gloucester - 1125 (re-joined)
Adrian Foale, Herne Bay - 1185
Glyn Calvert, Totnes - 1186
David Lang, Farnham - 1187
Steve Chalmers, Westcliff on Sea - 1188

Group Tours

Subject, of course, to no reversal of the Government roadmap out of lockdown, we hope to resume Group Tours this year. If anyone has any suggestions as to where we could visit, please E Mail them to the editor (address on previous page) who will forward them on to the Tours Organiser.

Meanwhile, Member Matthew Evans will be running a day trip from Southend to Central London using an Ensignbus double-decker on Bank Holiday Monday, 30 August, fare £10. Pickups in the Southend area and en-route by arrangement. To book please text him on 07746 779 414 or phone (after 2000 Mon-Fri or at weekends).

Public Transport Services in the Southend-on-Sea District, 1900-1955

This is the title of an on-line book created by former south Essex resident **Richard Hayden** as a lockdown project from his home in Brisbane, Australia. It runs to 151 pages and covers 33 different operators. There are many route diagrams, and the book aims to tell the story of the development of the tram, trolleybus, and bus services in the area (but not the vehicles). Despite the cover title, almost a third of the book covers the period after 1955, up to 1964.

Richard explains: "My family moved from East Ham to South Benfleet in 1947 and my dad, who was a trolleybus driver with LTE, became employed by the Bridge Family. His photos taken in the Canvey depot, have been published on the sct61 website. I remember when the Benfleet and Canvey fleets became 'Red' in 1951, only to turn 'Green' again a few years later. I am lucky enough to remember the Southend trolleybuses, the old Southend Pier Railway before the AC Cars and riding on Bristol K5Gs in regular service. Watching the continuous stream of old buses, used for the oil refinery workers, climbing to the top of 'Bread and Cheese Hill', was a sight to be seen. I am sure my book has some errors, for which I apologise in advance, and if you find any, please let me know".

We've not yet had time to read and digest the contents so can't comment on the accuracy of the text, which is based on content from other published sources, not primary research. The link is <https://online.fliphtml5.com/pkjhd/vmxn/> and a pdf copy is also available by e-mail from Richard Delahoy (details on page 2). Comments on the book's content should be sent to Richard Hayden at dickiehayden@gmail.com.

Timetables & Leaflets

From the estate of our late member John Taylor, we have a number of timetables, faretables and leaflets covering Eastern National, Westcliff Motor Services, Southend & District Joint Services, Southend Transport and Thamesway for disposal. These are available free to members on a first come, first served basis and on the strict understanding that they are for your own personal collection, not for resale. For a list, please e-mail Richard Delahoy or write (with an SAE), contact details on page 2.

The Running Card by Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Sunday 27 June: 'On the Buses', London Bus Museum, Brooklands

Sunday 25 July: Fenland Bus Festival, Whittlesea & Classic Car Show, Ramsay.

Free Bus Services from Peterborough and from Whittlesea to Ramsay. www.easternbusgroup.co.uk

Sunday 1 August: Vintage Bus Day, Mid Norfolk Railway, Dereham Station. Static display and free service to Yaxham. www.midnorfolkrailway.co.uk.

Sunday 8 August: Buses Festival, East of England Showground, Peterborough. www.keybuses.com/buses-fest

Saturday 14 August: Delaine Bus Museum Open Day, Bourne.

Sunday 15 August: Suffolk Bus Run. Haverhill- Sudbury-Ipswich- Bury St Edmunds. www.easterncountiesbuspreservationgroup

Sunday 22 August: Lodge's Coaches Car & Bus Show. The Garage, High Easter. Vehicle entries to Andrew Lodge, 01245 231262.

Sunday 5 September: RF and Friends - celebrating 70 years of RF. Epping-Ongar Railway.

Sunday 10 October: South East Bus Festival, Kent Showground, Detling. www.southeastbusfestival.wixsite.co/sef

Events are subject to restrictions and cancellations as may be ordered or directed at the time. The Group cannot be responsible for any changes due to such circumstances.

Obituary: Robin Jenkinson, 1939-2021

by Richard Delahoy

We are very sorry to have to report the death of Robin Jenkinson, our former Photographic Officer, in May, just two weeks short of his 82nd birthday.

Robin had a lifetime's involvement in the bus industry and in bus preservation. His efforts to try to preserve ex-Westcliff MS Bristol K AIN 825 - a bus new in the year that Robin was born - were told in EBN 551 in 2010, although that bus went instead to the British Transport Commission collection at Clapham. Robin turned his attention to other historically significant buses and after a period owning an REO Gold Crown, AG 6470, he bought JYW 430, the 1944 Eastern National Bristol K with the prototype ECW post-war body, jointly with Terry Smith in 1964 (see EBN 552). The bus played a starring role in Robin's wedding in Kent in 1965 as told in an article in *Buses Annual* 1971. Robin later sold his share to Terry. He then entertained thoughts of preserving one of the fast disappearing 'Observation Coaches' and put in an appeal for information which might lead to finding a suitable one to preserve, through the small ads in *Buses Illustrated*, as it then was. Apparently, he did not even get one lead - but did get lots of offers to sell him Dinky Toys models!

Then in 1966 he invested in a very rare beast, JVB 908, a Leyland Royal Tiger with a body built by Mann Egerton of Norwich in 1951 to the Crellin-Duplex half-decker style. The story of its purchase and initial restoration work was recounted by Robin in EBN 553, along with some information about this most unusual design, and you can read more at www.jvb908.co.uk, learning how Robin struggled against incredible odds to complete the restoration. The coach was later gifted to the East Anglian Transport Museum when Robin's health had deteriorated such that he could no longer care for it, but subsequent events left a very bad taste in Robin's mouth, as the web site explains.

His preservation exploits didn't end there. In 1972 he jointly bought a 1927 Guy FBB single decker that had been new to the Great Western Railway, YF 714. It was stored at Colchester and moved with Robin to Conssett and was sold to Colin & Helen Billington of the Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust in 1997 and is now fully restored. Then in 1987 he bought a 1949 Eastern Counties Bristol K, KNG 374, from dealer Ben Jordan. It is now fully restored in the care of the Ipswich Transport Museum who acquired it in 2000.

After National Service in the RAF where he was a police dog-handler, Robin worked for Lloyds Bank in London whilst living first in Kent and then Colchester, where his family hailed from. He had been fascinated by the art of signwriting and after some amateur efforts, started to do jobs on a part time basis. After moving to Colchester, he was introduced to Osbornes of Tollesbury and as well as signwriting various buses and coaches there, they put him through his PSV test in 2211 MK, the well-known AEC Bridgemaster, ex demonstrator, and he drove on a

casual basis for them. Subsequently he left banking and became self-employed (a parallel with my own career, albeit my work in the bus industry for the last 24 years has been very different to Robin's), doing a mixture of signwriting and driving. I didn't know him then, but there was a connection in that he had done the signwriting on OVX 139D, the ex-Colchester PD2A that I learnt to drive a bus in; it then belonged to a training firm at Kelvedon.

In March 2010 he wrote that he had driven for no less than 42 companies and had sign written buses and coaches for different 26 bus companies, along with many other commercial vehicles. Amongst those he drove for was National Travel South East at Kelvedon, often on the Eastlander service from East Anglia to Cheltenham.

The advent of modern computer graphics killed off the signwriting trade, and after a year in Northamptonshire, Robin moved north to County Durham in 1988, taking JVB 908 with him for continued restoration. There he earned a living as a freelance bus inspector and occasional driver, working for another 15 operators, before finally retiring to a village near Diss. The fascinating story of his signwriting and driving experiences was serialised over 29 pages in *Vintage Roadscene* magazine in six articles in 2010 and they are highly recommended

if you can still find copies. I only wish that I had recorded some of the other tales he told on my visits to him. He had an extensive collection of negatives that he took over many years, although a large number were sold to help fund restoration of JVB. He also managed the Group's negative collection after Lyn Watson's death until we decided to gift our collection to The Bus Archive.

His work has featured in EBN from time to time, most recently last month to illustrate John Bath's EN Memories article.

In his own words, "Preserving and restoring JVB is the biggest accomplishment of my life, and I am proud of winning the battle I had to do so. I am determined that JVB will be a memorial to my life". Let's hope that it can be displayed at EATM as a lasting tribute to Robin's dedication to bus preservation.

Thankfully, all the buses and coaches listed above remain in preservation, albeit JYW 430 in the Canvey Museum collection is in need of a major re-restoration.

He is survived by wife Maggie plus daughter, Fay, but special mention must be made of son, Neal, who predeceased Robin. We offer our sincere condolences to them and to his brother, Roger. Thanks to John Bath and Chris Stewart for their help in compiling this tribute.



More Photos of Tollesbury Depot

As a follow up to the photos of Tollesbury depot in EBN 684, **Richard Delahoy** has submitted the following.

Right: Remembering Tollesbury depot in Osborne's days. Richard's first visit there was on 5 February 1974, where he found contrasting K registered Bedfords. On the left is 51, TPU 650K, one of a pair of Bedford SB5s with Duple Vega coach bodies new that month but withdrawn and sold only just over two years later. Being cleaned is 36, RHK 756K, a YRQ with Willowbrook bus body new the previous December; it lasted with Osborne's until the end of 1982. There's also interest on the margins of the picture: in the left-hand corner are a pair of ex Doncaster Corporation AEC Reliance / Roe buses, 8625/9 DT, still in Doncaster blue livery. They were not operated by Osborne's can anyone fill in more of their history for us? Whilst to the right are a pair of Mark 1 Ford Cortina cars - the same iconic make of car that Richard had driven to Tollesbury in!



Below: Hedingham 739, T117 DBW (an Alexander ALX 400 bodied Dennis Trident, new to City of Oxford) was the very last bus to return to the former Osborne's depot in Tollesbury, coming in off commercial service 91 from Witham at 1839 on 22 July 2016, displaying a fitting rear destination blind, having just entered the cavernous depot building, which is minus its famous clock, for the very last time.



Special & Non-Standard Liveries

Member Anthony Randall has suggested that now that travel restrictions have been eased “it would be helpful to us ‘out of area’ members who may wish to travel in to try and photograph buses in special liveries if EBN carried details of where those vehicles are based, and if they have any apparently regular routes or workings”. A reminder that our monthly on-line fleet list, available on our website at <https://www.signal-training.com/ebeg/Fleets.htm>, includes details of allocations and liveries for First Essex buses. But for convenience a list is included below which also includes brief details of routes operated. Two other major operators in the area, Arriva and Hedingham are also listed. We have expanded this to include all vehicles not in the main livery of the operators. It is always worth checking on Bustimes before venturing out as to whether a particular vehicle is in operation on that day and if so on what route(s). In a future issue we'll explain more about the information available on Bustimes.org and also the newly introduced regional vehicle data on London Vehicle Finder (LVF - <https://lvf.io/>). Thanks to Richard Delahoy, Mark Lloyd and Peter Mansbridge in compiling this information.

First Essex

All vehicles in standard Urban livery except as listed in the following table.

Fleet Number	Livery	Allocation	Routes Operated
33191, 37985	Heritage Westcliff on Sea	Hadleigh	Any Hadleigh double-deck services
33424	Heritage Eastern National NBC	Basildon	Normally on school route 625 on schooldays, but on any Basildon service at other times although 100 unlikely.
37007	Heritage Eastern National mid-1990s Badgerline style	Colchester	Any Colchester services
37986	Heritage Eastern National 1968 FLF coach style	Hadleigh	Any Hadleigh double-deck services
69520	Heritage Thamesway mid-1990s Badgerline style	Hadleigh	Almost exclusively on interworked routes 22, Canvey to Basildon and 28, Southend to Basildon, with use on anything else extremely rare
33404	Heritage Midland 'Red'	Hadleigh	Any Hadleigh double-deck services
33401-3/5	Barbie	Hadleigh	Any Hadleigh double-deck services
32629	Barbie	Colchester	Any Colchester services
32669, 32673	Midland Bluebird	Colchester	Any Colchester services
36837-36843	Essex Airlink	Chelmsford	Mainly X30, also 70 and 42 shorts M-F, schools S33 & 525
67161, 67163	Essex Airlink	Basildon	Mainly X10, also other Basildon services
69429, 69432/4	Urban 2 with white front	Chelmsford	Any Chelmsford services*
66970, 66971	Urban 2 with pink front	Colchester	Any Colchester services
37133-6, 37138-9	Urban 2 with green front	Colchester	Route branded for route 62 but also appear on other Colchester services
67160/62/64, 69421, 69433	Urban 2, three shades of green	Chelmsford	Any Chelmsford services*
69901-4, 69906-14, 69916/18-19	Urban 2, City Country Connections	Basildon	Mainly 100, also other Basildon services
66798/800-1, 66803-4/10/16, 66828	Urban hybrid	Colchester	Any Colchester services
69905, 69915/17	Urban hybrid	Basildon	Mainly 100, also other Basildon services
67189-67197	All black Park & Ride	Chelmsford	Mainly on Park & Ride but also on other Chelmsford services, principally on 31, 42 and 71 groups
67779	Blue overall advert for Contactless and App	Colchester	Any Colchester services
41521	Pink publicity bus overall wrap	Colchester	Not used in normal service, but occasionally used on driver shuttles between depot and bus station
66846/48/60/63	All red driver training	Chelmsford	Not used in normal service, but can be seen mainly in Chelmsford but also around the county

* A few routes may not normally operate longer single-deckers (69 series in these cases).

Arriva

All vehicles in old standard aquamarine / cream 'cow-horn' livery except as listed in the following table.

Fleet Number	Livery	Allocation	Routes Operated
1012, 3873, 3889, 4008, 4093, 4095-4099, 4113, 4184, 4230, 4238	New blue	Harlow	1012 - occasional use on service 724 as a spare vehicle as ULEZ compliant. 3873 & 3889 - Most commonly on services 9, 10, 59 but can appear on most routes operated by Harlow. 4008 - Mainly on service 311 at Bishops Stortford but can appear on other routes. 4093, 4095-4099 - Mainly on route 724 but can appear on other routes, especially services 508/509/510 4113 - Mainly on routes 508/509/510 and 724 but can appear on other routes. 4184 / 4230 / 4238 - Most commonly on services 2, 3, 59 but can appear on most routes operated by Harlow.
3777, 4182	New blue	Southend	Can be any route but often 7/8, 29
3816	Late 1980s Southend Transport blue, white & red	Southend	Can be any route but often 7/8, 29. Due to be converted into a driver trainer.
3820	De-branded 'Max'	Harlow	Most commonly on services 9, 10, 59 but can appear on most routes operated by Harlow.
4071-4075	All black Park & Ride	Colchester	Park & Ride service
4076-4087	New blue with branding for 508/509/510	Harlow	Mainly on services they are branded for but can appear on other routes, especially service 724
4101	Sapphire (new style)	Harlow	Mainly on route 724 but can appear on other routes, especially services 508/509/510
4323-4324	Sapphire (new style) with branding for 133	Colchester	Mainly on service they are branded for but can appear on other routes
6458	Standard aquamarine and cream but soldier silhouette, poppies & 'We Will Remember Them' lettering	Southend	1, 29 and special school journeys on 7 & 29
6499	Traditional Southend Corporation blue & cream	Southend	1, 29 and special school journeys on 7 & 29
6509	Standard aquamarine and cream but with cream at side replaced by Pride rainbow colours	Southend	1, 29 and special school journeys on 7 & 29
1000, (LCA) 06	All white	Southend	Not used in normal service, used on driver shuttles between depot and Travel Centre
T3535	Reversed old standard livery, mainly cream	Southend	Not used in normal service, driver trainer

Hedingham & Chambers

All vehicles in new two-tone red livery except as listed in the following table.

Fleet Number	Livery	Allocation	Routes Operated
1-2	Chambers Coach	Sible Hedingham	School services only
253-8, 260	Previous red & cream	Clacton	Any route from this depot
259, 263	Previous red & cream	Sible Hedingham	Any route from this depot

266-268, 284, 298	Carousel (similar colours to new livery)	Clacton	Any route from this depot - 284 being prepared for service
287	Konnectbus (blue / grey skirt)	Kelvedon	Any route from Kelvedon or Sible Hedingham
292, 293	Previous red & cream	Kelvedon	Any route from Kelvedon or Sible Hedingham
460	'Greatest Hits Radio' ad (as seen on front cover)	Clacton	Any route from this depot - major use on routes 97/98
470	Cream / red band, most of front	Sible Hedingham	Route 88/89
500	East Yorkshire (cream and dark red relief adapted to Clacton Breeze branding)	Clacton	Route 134
506, 517, 525	All red	Sible Hedingham	506 Schools, 517 any route from the depot, 525 on 88/89 whilst 616 off road.
520, 521, 524, 527, 528	All red	Clacton	Any route from depot except 97/98
523	All red	Kelvedon	Any route from this depot
510	Konnectbus (blue / yellow band / grey skirt)	Sible Hedingham	Any route from this depot
584	Go-Ahead London (red with dark grey skirt & yellow pinstripe)	Sible Hedingham	Any route from this depot
586, 587	East Yorkshire (dark red with cream skirt & top)	Kelvedon	Primarily schools but 586 is OPO fitted and can venture onto service work when required from Kelvedon or Sible Hedingham
588	East Yorkshire (as 586/7 but more cream including at front and deeper skirt)	Sible Hedingham	School services primarily but is OPO fitted and sees use on services from Sible Hedingham and Kelvedon when required.
613	Konnectbus (grey outline, dark blue main, yellow swirl)	Sible Hedingham	School services only
9016-9017	All red	Clacton	Not used in normal service, driver trainers

Below: 3777, a Wrightbus bodied VDL SB200 seen passing through the 'shared space' outside Southend Victoria station on 10 May 2021, is one of only two vehicles at Southend in the new Arriva light blue livery. **Richard Delahoy**



Service Revisions

by Paul Harvey

with thanks to LOTS, Essex, Hertfordshire & Suffolk County Councils, Omnibus Society (Eastern Branch) & Richard Delahoy

From 17 May 2021 more seating capacity now being offered by bus operators. Further lifting of restrictions due to be introduced on 21 June.

29 May 2021

134 Clacton to Holland (M-S) **Go Ahead Hedingham** reintroduction of summer timetable every 30 mins throughout the day including Bank Holiday Mondays with open top bus.

1 June

C392 Harlow to Hoddesdon Rye Park (M-F) **Epping Forest Community Transport** changes to route and timetable section between Hoddesdon & Rye Park withdrawn.

21 June

14 Waltham Cross to Upshire Shops (M-F) **Vectare** additional journeys added Mon to Fri and new Saturday service introduced. New 14C Sat journey added from Epping at 0650 to Waltham Cross. New 14B journey added at 1546 Waltham Cross to Waltham Abbey on Mon to Fri.

19/19C Chipping Ongar to Epping St Margaret's Hospital (M-S) **Vectare** new services one journey from Ongar Mon to Fri at 0628 and one journey from Epping Hospital Mon to Sat at 1937. Service 19C one journey from Ongar Sat at 0628 to Epping Station.

22 Waltham Cross to Waltham Abbey Skillet Hill Farm (Sat) **Vectare** Mon to Fri service introduced & additional journeys on Sats added as service 22C Waltham Abbey Skillet Hill Farm to Waltham Cross via Shernbroke Road. Mon to Fri service to terminate at Waltham Abbey Maynard Court.

The following all **National Express**.

075 London Victoria to Cambridge via Stansted Airport (D) reintroduced three journeys each direction.

076 Stansted Airport to Cambridge (D) new service one journey each direction.

251 Stansted Airport to Ipswich (D) new service one journey each direction.

482 London Victoria to Ipswich via Stansted Airport & Colchester (D) reintroduced two journeys each direction.

727 Norwich to Brighton via Stansted Airport (D) reintroduced five return journeys.

737 Oxford to Stansted Airport (D) reintroduced four journeys each direction

777 Birmingham to Stansted Airport (D) reintroduced four journeys each direction.

A6 London Victoria to Stansted Airport (D) reintroduced mostly hourly service corrects entries in EBN 684-7.



by **Peter Mansbridge** with thanks to Richard Delahoy, Matthew Evans, Keith Sadler, Grange Travel & Travellers Choice drivers and Bustimes

Harlow

Sapphire liveried Alexander Dennis Enviro 200 MMC 4102 (YX17 NYT) was destroyed by fire while on route 724 at Harlow on 31 March. This was one of the eight Enviro 200s which arrived from Kent in February (see EBN 683).

Ware allocated Volvo B7RLE / Wright 3856-8 (KE54 LNR/LPC/F) were used from Harlow for a few weeks in late April / early May, normally on the school journeys on routes 10, 508/509/510 or school service S308 but they did appear on other routes. Then from 13 May Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus 3820 (GN07 AVG) transferred from Ware to Harlow. This carries de-branded Max livery from its time at Southend, its use is not concentrated on school journeys and routes in the way that 3856-8 were.

After a time without any, the Harlow allocation has regained a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter - 1012 (BF67 WGZ). It is being used as an ancillary vehicle for service 724 and spends a lot of its time parked at Watford Junction - it is unclear if it returns to Harlow each night. It is ULEZ compliant and therefore has seen occasional use on service 724 to cover breakdowns, etc., since the service went over to Euro 6 Alexander Dennis Enviro 200 operation, once such occasion being the 2000 journey from Heathrow as far as Watford Junction on 30 April.

Southend School Duplication

To update last month's EBN, the second Vectare journey on Friday afternoons is usually operated by the same vehicle as their afternoon trip on the 7, so that the afternoon totals should be 13 vehicles for 14 journeys (13 vehicles for 15 journeys on Fridays). Last month

we also reported on a possible additional vehicle on a Friday, a Klarners coach, apparently on school duplication on route 7 on 30 April. However, it seems to have been an aberration and the journey it appeared to be working has not appeared again. Klarners continue to provide one coach each day, confirmed to be under subcontract from M&M Staffing rather than directly contracted to Arriva.

Despite the relaxation of capacity limits from 17 May, the school duplicates continued unchanged up to the end of the first half of the summer term on 28 May, although some runs were cancelled on the final day. It remains to be seen what duplication is required once schools return on 7 June and we will report on that next month.

Further vehicles noted on hire for school duplication are:

Grange Travel: BV19 YGC, Mercedes-Benz Tourismo.

Peter Godward Coaches: PO60 HZH, MAN 24.480 / Beulas inter-decker (illustrated on the next page).

Travellers Choice: PO18 EET & PO18 EEU, Volvo B11RT / Jonckheere; PO16 LZL & PO18 EEW, Volvo B11R / Jonckheere; SA17 ELD (originally LSK 876), SA17 ELE (originally LSK 878) & SA17 ELF (originally LSK 813, also illustrated on the next page), Volvo B11RT/Plaxton. [former registrations corrected]

This now takes the tally of hired in vehicles to at least 61 since last September.

Coldchester

Park & Ride Enviro 200s continue to see occasional use on service 77 due to a vehicle shortage, with 4075 on 11, 19, 20 & 21 May and 4073 on 18 May. In addition, 4071 worked on the 133 on the afternoon of 25 May, covering for a breakdown.

Dart 1564 is in use on shuttle duties only and 1558/63 remain on loan at Guildford.

Capacity and Social Distancing

In common with most of the bus industry and following approaches by the trade body CPT-UK to the DfT, capacity restrictions on buses were substantially eased from 17 May, the only restrictions now being on not using seats that face other passengers, not using the seats very close to the cab, and no standing passengers. Notices that had been displayed on cab doors were replaced by revised ones, showing capacities of 27 or 30 (mid-length single decks), 38 (longer single decks) and 65 (double deckers).

Unladen Weights

A recent check at Southend reveals a wide range of unladen weights, highlighting the differences between lighter types such as the Optare Versa and ADL Enviro 400, compared to a more traditional heavyweight single decker in the form of the Volvo B7RLE.

Short Versa 7,560 kgs

SB200 newer 9,096 kgs

Long Versa 7,820 kgs

Volvo B7RLE 11,389 kgs

DAF SB120 7,940 kgs

ADL E400 10,645 kgs.

SB200 older 8,560 kgs

As can be seen, the B7RLEs weigh almost 50% more than a long Versa for a comparable passenger capacity, and the Volvo single-deckers even weigh three-quarters of a tonne more than the double deck Enviro400s! Of course, the theory is that a heavyweight bus will last longer, but meanwhile the fuel consumption penalty must be substantial.

Below: Southend United FC fans had a dismal end to the season with The Blues being relegated from the Football League after 101 years and from next season will be playing in the National League. Arriva 3825, a Wrightbus bodied Volvo B7RLE new for the Fastrack services in Kent, passes the Roots Hall ground as it comes up Victoria Avenue on 21 May. **Richard Delahoy**





Above: Travellers Choice continue to provide a variety of coaches for school duplication in Southend, with vehicles being swapped over for maintenance or to other duties on a regular basis; a dozen different vehicles have now been observed on their four workings. One seen for the first time on 21 May 2021 was SA17 ELF in the latest Travellers Choice livery of white with silver lettering. A Volvo B11RT with Plaxton Elite body to full PSVAR spec, it was new to Parks of Hamilton in 2017, registered LSK 813 from new. That registration has been used repeatedly by Parks on new vehicles, with at least three other coaches carrying LSK 813 since 1995! [registration details corrected]. It was operating on Arriva service 1, close on the heels of Jonckheere bodied SB19 GNU - so we have a Gnu being chased by an elf! Southend Travel Centre. Below: Peter Godward Coaches provide three vehicles for Arriva Southend school duplication, usually one double decker, a Wrightbus bodied VDL DB250, and two MCV Evolution VDL SB180 service buses, as illustrated in recent issues of EBN. Standing in for one of the single deck buses on 21 May was a total contrast in the shape of P060 HZH, seen here in Southend Travel Centre on service 7, towering over the Arriva service bus it was duplicating. This highly unusual coach, in grey livery, is a MAN 24.480 with a Beulas Glory body, CH67/4Ft. When new in 2010 it was exhibited at the Bus and Coach Show at the NEC before entering service with Florida Coaches of Halstead. Later it ran for Coach Choice of Wolverhampton before passing to Godward in 2015. Both **Richard Delahoy**



Allocation Changes

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

Period 2 2021/22 (25 April - 22 May)

31785 FG-CR (oos), 32476 CR-FG, 32485 CF-CR*, 33088 HH (oos)-Disposal, 33186 BN-BN (oos), 33559 BN-BN (oos), 44006 HH-CF*, 63330 CR-HH*, 63331 CR-HH*, 63335 CR (oos)-CR, 63344 CR (oos)-CR, 66759 CR-BN*, 66860 CF (oos)-DS, 66861 CF (oos)-Disposal, 66872 CR-CF*, 67167 CF-BN*, 67168 CF-BN*, 67195 HH-CF*, 67197 HH-CF*, 67902 BN-BN (oos)

* Over the weekend of 15-16 May in readiness for the timetable changes from Step 3 (of four) lifting of lockdown restrictions on 17th. 31785 entered service on school route 17 on 24 May but since then has mainly been used on normal services. It has had its 'Potteries' fleet names removed. 32485 has returned to CR after only just over a month at CF. 63331 entered service at HH on route 27 on 25th with 63330 following on 1 June on 28/22.

Disposals

33088 to Ensignbus, 20 May 2021.

66861 for scrap, c May 2021. This was originally intended to have been the fourth driver trainer but was replaced by 66860.

Driver Trainer

66860 converted to a driver trainer and repainted all red with vinyls, although not yet in use.

New Livery

67160 was the fourth bus to receive the new green 'Essex Bus' livery, re-entering service after repaint on 20 May, and 69433 was the fifth, back in service on 5 June. Like 67164 reported last month, they were repainted at Mardens. All three have different straplines on the cove panels to the first two buses, 69421 and 67162, that were repainted into the new livery, 67160 and 69433 have 'pay contactless on all our buses' and 67164 has 'from £1 Chelmsford city travel' each side. Incidentally, these repaints have discontinued depot stickers.

The repainting of 67160 & 67164 brings to an end the silver and green X10 / X30 livery. Who could have envisaged that when this livery was introduced in November 2016, and when two double-deckers then received it in March 2018, that it would be so short lived? But it has been a victim of its own success, or at least the routes it was introduced for, with route X30 gaining double-deck Scania in February last year with new 'Essex Airlink' blue livery and branding, which has also been applied to two Enviro 200 MMCs on route X10. For the record, the replacement liveries applied to the two Volvo B9TLs and twelve Enviro 200 MMCs which were in silver and green are: 37985 Heritage Westcliff-on-Sea pre-war, 37986 Heritage 1968 FLF coach, 67160/2/4 Essex Bus green and yellow, 67161/3 'Essex Airlink' blue, 67165-67171 Urban (67170 since destroyed by fire).

School Services

The below reports are from 10 May to 28 May inclusive (the week after was half term).

Colchester

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

17, two-vehicle route: 30564 (10th-14th, 25th-28th), 30567 (10th-14th, 17th-20th), 37062 (17th am, 19th am), 37004 (17th pm), 37140 (18th am), 32477 (18th pm), 37017 (19th pm), 37020 (20th, 21st), 32669 (21st), 31785 (24th, its first day in service), 32629 (24th), 32485 (25th am), 37042 (25th pm), 37034 (26th), 37136 (27th am), 37010 (27th pm, 28th pm), 37005 (28th am). 67C: 37006 (10th), 63336 (11th am), 37062 (11th pm, 14th am), 37007 (12th am), 32477 (12th pm, 18th am), 37054 (13th am, 20th pm, 27th pm), 32673 (13th pm, 24th), 66803 (17th am), 37016 (17th pm, 21st am, 25th pm), 37135 (18th pm), 37015 (19th pm), 32669 (20th am), 37136 (21st pm), 37005 (25th am), 37020 (26th am), 37034 (26th pm, 27th pm), 67735 (27th am), 31785 (28th am), 37010 (28th pm). Nothing reported 14th pm or 19th am.

Chelmsford

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

525: 36837 (10th, 13th, 14th), 32484 (11th am), 36841 (11th pm), 36843 (11th pm, 12th, 20th am, 26th, 27th am), 36838 (17th, 19th, 20th pm, 21st, 24th am, 28th), 36839 (18th), 32631 (24th pm, 25th), 36842 (27th pm).

570: 32484 (10th, 14th, 17th, 18th, 20th, 24th-27th), 32551 (11th), 32483 (12th, 13th am), 32485 (13th pm), 32482 (19th, 21st), 32642 (28th).

620: 32483 (10th, 11th, 17th-21st, 24th-27th), 32484 (12th, 13th, 28th), 32485 (14th).

S33: 32551 (10th pm), 36841 (10th pm), 36843 (10th am, 13th, 14th, 25th), 36837 (11th, 12th, 17th, 18th), 36839 (19th, 27th, 28th), 32642 (20th, 21st), 32641 (24th), 36842 (26th).

S42A in mornings then S57 & S32 in afternoons and S42B in mornings then S45 & S42A in afternoons were the two principal schedules for these routes, although there were occasionally variations to this basic pattern, plus from 17th a new S45 in the mornings and S42B in afternoons were introduced. These were all mainly worked by 44913, 44914 and 44915 but others reported were 44544 (19th), 42968 (21st), 44597 (24th) and 44900 (25th) on the afternoon S45 & S42A duties, 44900 on S42B & S45 am and S42A pm on 26th, 44006 on S42B (20th pm), 42932 on S45 am (27th), 42945 on S57 & S32 pm (27th), 44538 on S42B pm (27th), 44900 on S42B am (27th).

Basildon

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

561, three-vehicle route: 32532 (10th-14th, 17th-21st, 24th-28th), 32539 (10th-14th, 17th-21st, 24th, 25th, 26th am, 27th, 28th), 33507 (10th-14th, 18th, 19th pm, 27th, 28th), 33424 (17th, 24th), 32531 (19th am, 20th, 21st, 25th, 26th), 33574 (26th pm).

625: 33424 (10th-14th, 18th-21st, 25th-28th), 69908 a second vehicle 12th pm, 33507 (17th), 32531 (24th).

725: 47653 (10th-14th, 17th-21st, 24th, 25th pm, 26th, 27th, 28th), 47655 (25th am).

825: 33504 (10th, 11th, 12th am, 13th pm, 14th, 17th-21st, 24th-28th), 33558 (12th pm), 33548 (13th am).

Hadleigh

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

No service on route 820 on Monday 10th due to the emergency closure of Hullbridge Road, caused by a burst water main that led to a partial collapse of the road the previous day (see 'Other Area News & Workings' below). Due to the diversionary route going under low bridges, for the rest of the week this route was single deck operated. On 11th 42487 both am and pm and 47646 pm. On 12th 47526 (pm) maybe also 42487. 47527 (13th pm, no report am), 44080 (14th pm, no report am) were other sightings. Back to normal from 17th with 33133 once again operating the route. Whilst 820 was single deck operated, 33133 worked on normal services, e.g., on 26 (11th), 27X, short 22/28 (12th), 20/27 plus 21B in evening (13th), 21 (14th).

820 from 17th: 33133 (17th, 18th, 19th pm, 20th, 21st, 25th-28th), 33136 (19th am, 24th)

822: 33134 (10th-14th, 17th-21st, 24th-28th)

827: 33136 (10th-14th, 17th, 18th, 19th pm, 20th, 21st, 25th-28th), 33133 (19th am, 24th)

Other Area News & Workings

From 17 May 2021, with Step 3 (out of four) out of lockdown, restrictions on seating capacities were eased. The capacity stickers in the window next to the door have been replaced by new ones, as illustrated right, this one being on 44540. Rear facing seats (e.g., over wheel arches) are still marked out of use and seats behind the driver are still taped off.



Colchester

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

News of the Harwich routes (4-31 May). The Monday to Friday timetable continued with six buses in the morning peak, of which three continued on all day service. The six buses were normally four or five double-deckers, with two or one single-deckers. The three all day service buses were normally two double-deckers, and one single-decker. See 17 May entry below for changes to the Monday - Friday peak hour duties. The Saturday service was normally single deck operated. The Sunday 102 service was double deck operated, still interworked with service 75. On 5 May a serious accident closed the A12 near Colchester, caused gridlock in Colchester and disrupted afternoon peak services. 66804 worked 1805 Colchester - Harwich 103 instead of 32478. 32478 was sent dead from Colchester to Harwich to work 1900 Colchester - Harwich 102. On 7th 32477 was on 0712 Harwich - Colchester 103 instead of a single-decker. On Sunday 16th 32629 worked 0745 Harwich - Colchester 102, did not go onto 75. 37006 worked 0805 Colchester - Harwich 102, 0945 Harwich - Colchester 102, also did not go onto 75. 32087, 37034, 37133 then worked on 75 and 102 for the rest of the day. All this due to roadworks closing the usual route on 75 after Colchester Zoo. Buses diverted via Tollgate and A12 to reach Tiptree and then resumed normal 75 route. With the revised timetables from 17th, the following changes were made to 103/104, to improve reliability: 0712 Harwich - Colchester 103 has four minutes extra running time and terminates at Head Street, not Middleborough; 0720 Harwich - Colchester 104 has five minutes extra running time; 0915 Mistley - Colchester 103 now departs at 0920; 1305 Harwich - Colchester 104 now arrives at Colchester Stanwell Street at 1421, not 1428, so that 1440 Colchester - Harwich 104 departs at 1435 and gains extra running time (this journey takes schoolchildren home from Manningtree High School). These changes allowed the morning peak 103/104 buses to cover two new short workings on service 67 as follows: 32673 worked 0605 Harwich - Colchester 104, 0731 175, 0850 174, 1050 175, 1245 174 Colchester - Fingringhoe - Colchester circulars, then worked as required (no change to this duty); 67735 worked 0712 Harwich - Colchester Head Street 103, dead to Berechurch, 0902 Berechurch Lethe Grove - Colchester 67, then worked as required; 37034 worked 0610 Colchester - Maldon 75, 0711 Maldon - Colchester 75, dead to Berechurch, 0825 Berechurch Lethe Grove - Colchester 67, dead to Mistley, 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103, then worked as required; 32485, 37035, 67742 on 103/104 all day.

On Bank Holiday Monday 31 May 37007, 37037, 37054 were on 102.

10 Enviro 300s worked on 103/104 in this period plus nine Volvo B7RLEs and five StreetLites. Double-decker workings were five Volvo B7TL / ALX400s, 22 Volvo B7TL / Wright Eclipse Geminis (so that was all of Colchester's B7TL allocation apart from 30564/7 (usually on school route 17) and out of service 31785 and 37027) and five Volvo B9TL / Wright Eclipse Geminis.

On the Clacton routes, 74B continued to be single-deck operated except on Saturdays until the timetable changes of Monday 17th when it returned to double-deckers: 67730 (10th), 66801 (11th), 66804 (12th), 63339 (13th), 66800 (14th), 37140 (15th), 37005 (17th, 1 June), 37020 (18th), 37135 (19th), 37015 (20th, 22nd), 32478 (21st), 37042 (24th), 37010 (25th), 37053 (26th), 32477 (27th), 32629 (28th), 32547 (29th, 2 June), 30564 (3 June), 37054 (5 June). Single-decker 67737 on 4 June.

Route 76: 37020 (16th, Bank Holiday Monday 31st), 37035 & 67756 (23rd), 37053 (30th), 32485 (6 June).

Colchester allocated single-deckers on route 70: 67741 (17th, 21st, 5 June), 67779 (17th), 67737 (18th), 63336 (20th, 4 June), 66828 (20th), 67735 (21st), 67750 (22nd & 27th), 67755 & 67756 (28th plus 1 June).

30564 & 30567 unusually were used on non-school routes during half term.

Chelmsford

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

The Chelmer Valley Park & Ride re-opened on 17 May (Sandon had re-opened on 12 April), and 67195 & 67197 finally returned to Chelmsford after being at Hadleigh circa a year due to the pandemic service changes. All of the P&R batch are now back at Chelmsford. They continue to be used on other routes as the Park & Ride services are not yet running to full (pre-pandemic) timetables, although less so than previously. 67193 was an extremely rare working reported on X30 on Bustimes on 14th (although no sightings to confirm this), then 67197 on the route on 27th, this time with photographic evidence posted on Facebook.

32640 took a wrong turn out of Chelmsford Bus Station and got stuck under Duke Street railway bridge early morning of 17th whilst on route 350. It was replaced on the 350 by 67195, on its first day back in service at Chelmsford. This also caused delays to trains whilst the bus was removed, and the bridge checked. However, no damage was done to 32640 and it was back in service the next day.

In 'Service Revisions' last month it was reported that from 16 May an additional 31X journey has been introduced which operates at 1548 from Chelmsford to Maldon leaving two minutes ahead of the 31D to Burnham. This additional 31X was added for capacity reasons, with Volvo B7RLEs being restricted to 21 seats resulting in the 1550 31D being full. However, with the increase in capacity permitted from 17 May, there is now sufficient space, so the journey is likely to be removed. (The dates are not as illogical as might first appear, with the 31X being introduced the day before seating restrictions were relaxed, since the latter was a late decision by DfT and the extra service was registered before this was known.) On the first day the 31X was worked by 66794 which had arrived at Chelmsford Bus Station as a 70. It then returned out of service from Maldon to Chelmsford depot. The 31D at 1550 was operated by 66796, which had come from the depot.

'Essex Airlink' Scania's continue to work on 42 shorts and 70s, but their incidence has decreased due to the increased X30 timetable from 17th.

Other unusual / interesting sightings. 69432 on 351 on 12th, then on to 37, the 37 working is unusual as the route isn't normally allocated longer vehicles. 42931 (29th) and 42968 (4 June) on 70. 36841 on London Underground rail replacement on 29th with 36840 the next day. It has been some time since First Essex have been noted on rail replacement services, more details next page. 67164 on X30 (31st).

Basildon & Hadleigh

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

33567 was on loan from Basildon to Hadleigh for two days, on 21B on 20th and 27 on 21st.

Route 9 continues to be mainly four double-deckers (usually Enviro 400s) and one StreetLite during the week, but with SLs predominant on Saturdays, e.g., Saturday 22nd five SLs and 1 double-decker, 29th six SLs and no double-deckers, although on 5 June there were four double-deckers and only one SL. Other double-deckers reported on the route (in place of Enviro 400s): 32540 (11th), 32526 (18th, 21st, 4 June), 32249 (18th & 24th), 32532 (22nd & 28th), 33086 (24th), 32530 (26th, 3 June), 32539 (4 June), HH33385 unusual on 5 June, plus NBC liveried Enviro 400 on 2 June. Volvo B7RLE 66821 unusual on 18th, these vehicles are generally considered too long for the route.

Route 94A continues to be nearly all StreetLite operated, the only exceptions noted being 44908 (10th & 29th), 32249 (13th) and 33557 (6 June), plus 44910 on 22nd which broke down in Hullbridge Road, South Woodham Ferrers on the 0857 service from Basildon. The 0958 return from SWF did not operate and 32531 took over for the 1057 service from BN.

Other unusual / interesting sightings. On X10, as there are now only two Enviro 200 MMCs in dedicated livery (there were originally five) examples from the batch in Urban livery often appear. Also 69908 (22nd), 69919 (1 June) and 69912 (4 June). HH69518 on 27 (13th evening), 44908 on 251 (16th), HH33191 on short 28 (19th), HH33405 also on short 28 (21st), 44910 on 100 (21st), 33544 on 16 (Sunday 23rd), HH69515 on 27 (24th & 25th), 33573 on 100 (25th), HH33405 on 22 & 28 shorts (26th), 33557 on 16 (29th). From early May for six months, route 25 does not stop at Wickford, The Swan in both directions on Saturdays due to Wickford High Street being closed for a market on this day of the week. However, routes 10, 13, 14, 16, 94/A and X10, plus Stephensons 12, whilst diverted, do continue to serve these stops.

A water main burst on Hullbridge Road, Rayleigh on Sunday 9 May, leading to a partial collapse of the road and leaving Hullbridge completely cut-off from public transport (Hullbridge Road was closed between Rawreth Lane and Watery Lane.) Normally served by First Essex route 20 from Southend Travel Centre every 15 minutes, buses were terminated short at Rayleigh Station, as illustrated top right by the blind on HH36217 at Websters Way, Rayleigh, the next day (**Philip Mansbridge**). A shuttle service, also numbered 20, was introduced on Tuesday 11th using a single decker because of low bridges at Hockley Station and Hambro Hill, running from Hullbridge via Lower Road, Hockley Spa, Hambro Hill and Down Hall Road to Rayleigh Station and High Street, eight miles compared to three normally. The use of Hambro Hill is particularly unusual and noteworthy, it does not have a scheduled bus service normally. HH42487 is seen ascending the 1:12 hill on 11th. Hockley is also extremely rare territory for First Essex, 42487 again, with HH47646 behind, is seen passing the iconic Spa Public House there also on 11th (both photos **Daniel Hickey**). The first shuttle left Rayleigh Station at 0802, with the last one at 2030 from Rayleigh Station and 2115 from Hullbridge. School service 820 did not run on Monday 10th but for the rest of the week was also operated by a single-decker. The road re-opened early afternoon on Saturday 15th, with the full service 20, Southend to Hullbridge, restored. This also had an impact on Stephensons school services 515 (Stambridge to Swayne Park) and 816 (Ashingdon to St Bernard's via Westcliff High School), with alternative provision being made. Observations made by member Daniel Hickey of the shuttle services were (all HH allocated): 42487 (11th & 12th), 47646 (11th & 14th), 47526 (12th), 47644 (12th), 44003 (13th), 47527 (13th), 44006 (14th), 44080 (14th), 47521 (15th). Some of these were also used on route 820 as reported above.

On Sunday 16 May, there was a big c2c rail replacement job between Laindon and Shoeburyness. Unusually, First Essex were involved, **Richard Delahoy** noted "it's been quite a while since I've seen them on rail locally". Indeed, the last time rail replacement was reported for First Essex in EBN was in EBN 661 in April 2019. In a brief period of observation Richard saw 36216-8/20 & 37986, the latter illustrated bottom right at Leigh Station. Other operators he saw were Ensignbus, Stephensons, NIBS, Central Connect and Arriva (Grays depot), all with double-deckers.

With thanks to R Appleton, S Barham, J Collins, R Delahoy, D Edwards, J Elliott, P Harvey, D Hickey, P Mansbridge, W Morrison, J Podgorski, D Stebbing, C Stewart, R Webb, First Essex, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.



Photo Feature: Essex Buses in Ipswich

by Robert Appleton

EBN 684 featured a centre spread photo feature on former Essex Buses in Germany in 2005. We hope to include more Essex buses abroad in future issues, but for this month, something a little closer to home, just over the border in Suffolk.

All photos by **the author**.



Most of the recent First Bus liveries, including the new First Essex green one, can trace their origin back to the livery design introduced by First Eastern Counties at Ipswich in 2014. ADL Enviro 200 44516-9 were new to First Essex in April 2009, in Barbie livery, allocated to Harwich depot. When Harwich closed on 30 November 2013, they moved to Clacton depot. They then transferred to First Eastern Counties at Ipswich in June & August 2014 for use on competitive services against Ipswich Buses and became early recipients of this new livery, as seen top, previous page, 44519 at Ipswich Old Cattle Market on 6 July 2017.

44519 was repainted into the replacement Ipswich Reds livery, based on a similar design layout, by July 2019. The competitive services against Ipswich Buses were withdrawn and from September 2020 44516-9 were used on Village Links rural services from Ipswich and Woodbridge, mainly under contract to Suffolk County Council. On 20 April 2021, 44519 arrived at Ipswich Old Cattle Market on Village Link service 59 from Rushmere St Andrew, destination display already reset for the return journey, bottom previous page. Note Village Links branding added to the Ipswich Reds livery.

Top to bottom this page:

The other photos (apart from the last one) are ex-Essex buses, but here is one still with an Essex company and indeed only four months old. Eastern National Bristol VR / ECW 3095, allocated to Colchester, at Ipswich Railway Station on 27 September 1981, on a planned rail replacement service between Colchester and Ipswich.

Rallybeam Ltd t/a Blue Bus Services Bristol RELL / ECW 4 'Mercury', CVW 858G, (former Eastern National 1504) at Ipswich Old Cattle Market bus station on 23 February 1987. This was during a short period that Rallybeam Ltd ran an Ipswich town service 13 to the Chantry Estate in competition with Ipswich Buses service 13.

Simonds of Diss Enviro 200 SN11 FFM at Ipswich Old Cattle Market bus station on 20 April 2021. On layover whilst working on services 110-114 Diss - Eye - Ipswich. SN11 FFM was fleet number 709 in the Ensignbus fleet, it was sold to Simonds in December 2019.

To finish, a reversal, an Ipswich bus in Essex. Ipswich Buses 93 (X93 LBJ) Dennis Dart SLF / East Lancs Spryte B41F (11.4m long), new in 2000. Refurbished and made PSVAR compliant by Hants & Dorset Trim in 2015. Withdrawn in 2018. At the Colchester Road, Manningtree terminus of service 92, waiting to return to Ipswich, on 2 August 2017.



40th Anniversary of Wood Green Closure (13 June 1981)

At almost the same date that this issue of EBN is being posted through Members' letterboxes (although not on the exact date as this year 13 June is on a Sunday!) is the 40th anniversary of the closure of Wood Green garage. The garage was, of course, famous for featuring in the 'On the Buses' TV series.

A coach station had been established on Lordship Lane, close to Wood Green Underground station, by Keith & Boyle, t/a Orange Luxury Coaches, in 1932. Westcliff Motor Services acquired a 50% share in it in 1933 and used it as the terminus of their route 16 from Southend, which at the time ran in competition with the longer-established service of New Empress Saloons, who were owned by the City Motor Omnibus Co. In 1935 New Empress bought the route from Westcliff along with the 50% share in the coach station and started to use it for their service to Southend (and in 1936, New Empress was renamed City Coach Co). At some point City acquired full ownership of the site. City then sold out to the British Transport Commission in 1952 and the operations were taken over by Westcliff, who in turn were absorbed into Eastern National from the start of 1955.

To mark the anniversary of the closure, here is a selection of photos taken there over the years, starting on this page with the last day, all taken by **Alan Osborne**. Top shows a good overview of the front with a type of bus synonymous with the garage and the 251 route from Wood Green to Southend for many years, a Bristol FLF / ECW, 2895. It looks like someone has made off with the fleet number and depot plates! Next is a type that would be common on the 251 for the next five years, Bristol VRs / ECW, although running from Walthamstow not Wood Green after the route was cut back after the garage's closure (see photo below) and operating in normal bus livery, not, as here, in dual purpose livery as used on limited stop route 400 from King's Cross to Southend. This is 3075 on the last departure, Group member Richard Huggins can be seen taking notes. And finally, the last arrival, FLF 2918, with its crew posing in front. This last journey had been shadowed by preserved Bristol K / ECW AJN 825.



City LD4, LEV 920, a Beadle bodied Leyland PD1/1, new in February 1947. To Westcliff, then to Eastern National as 1111. In 1958 it was converted to open top by EN, was renumbered 2101 in 1964 and was withdrawn after the 1965 summer season.

S L Poole, Alan B Cross Collection / Copyright

A photo of it in open top form at Clacton appeared in EBN 545.



FIN 205, a Leyland PD2/12 with a Leyland body, was ordered by City, to be LD24, but was delivered after the Westcliff takeover, in May 1952, although it was delivered in City livery and with their fleet names and numbers. Here it is with Eastern National as 1139, it became 2119 in August 1964.

Richard Delahoy Collection

Photos of sister FIN 206 with subsequent owners were in EBN 683 (in colour) and EBN 684.



Eastern National's first Bristol FLF / ECW, 1571, 80 TVX, allocated to Wood Green (WG), leaves the garage for Southend (Tyldes Avenue), with 1574 (83 TVX behind). Renumbered 2700 and 2703 respectively in August 1964, when 80 TVX was at the time allocated to Brentwood and 83 TVX to Hadleigh.

Chris Stewart Collection



City LD5, NVX 302, a Roberts bodied Leyland PD1A, new in January 1949. To Westcliff and then to Eastern National as 1122.

S L Poole, Alan B Cross Collection / Copyright



358, TTW 577, numerically the last of Eastern National's Bristol L class, an LWL5G version allocated to Brentwood, blinded for a short 251 working to Wickford. Behind is a Leyland Titan and to the right another FLF from Eastern National's first batch, also allocated to WG, 1583. 358 became 1146 in August 1964, when it was at Basildon, and 1583 became 2712, when it was at Hadleigh.

EBEG Collection



The rear of the garage, with FJN 204, same specification as FJN 205 on previous page, also ordered by City, as LD23, and delivered in their livery to Westcliff, in April 1952. Seen here as Eastern National 1136, it became 2116 in August 1964.

EBEG Collection



Below: City LT3, BYL 983, a Leyland TS7T, new with Duple B43R body in 1935. Re-bodied by Heaver, FB43C, in 1947. Acquired by Westcliff with the takeover in February 1952 but withdrawn later that year.

EBEG Collection

Below right: finally, a photo not taken at Wood Green, but on the way there. C6, LPU 689, a Commer Q4 with a Heaver body, on the Eastern Avenue.

Alan B Cross



by **Mark Lloyd** with thanks to John Podgorski and the Hedingham website and to John Rugg for the leaflets.

Acquired Vehicles

???	LX56 EUC	Enviro 400 ex Blue Triangle E55 from Barking garage
???	LK08 FLL	Enviro 400 ex Go Ahead London EN20 from Bexleyheath garage
???	LK08 FLN	As above but EN22
???	LK08 FLP	As above but EN23

All arrived in the last full week of May, they are dual door H41/26D, as withdrawn from London condition, and will presumably be converted to single door and repainted before entry to service.

E55 was new to London Central and the three LK08 vehicles started life with First Capital (First London) in Dagenham and passed to GAL when First pulled out of London in September 2013. EN20/22/23 were originally DN33522/4/5 with First. They are reported to be the first batch of a larger quantity of replacement deckers due from the GAL fleet.

Loan Vehicle

613 SN62 AVY Enviro 400 - Konectbus 3 & 6 livery, has appeared in service.

Withdrawn Vehicle

852 A057 HCD Withdrawn due to serious engine failure. Being assessed but unlikely to be repaired.

Significant Allocations

261	KN - CN	by 6 May (returned to KN by 11 May)
500	KNu - CN	by 5 May transferred from winter storage ready for use on Clacton Breeze 134
524	KN - CN	by 9 May
528	KN - CN	by 4 May

Fleet News

Week commencing 9 May saw all three ex East Yorkshire Volvo B7TL Presidents allocated to Kelvedon. Konectbus loan 613 SN62 AVY Enviro 400 eventually strayed from school routes during late May. Long term withdrawn 285, SN03 EBV, Transbus MPD, withdrawn and cannibalised for spares at Clacton depot, has finally been collected by Alpha Recovery for scrap. 283, OU57 FGV, worked for a few days from Kelvedon before developing a fault and returned to the road late May. Currently 268/291/514/570/616/852 are or have been long term off-road.

Service News

Clacton Breeze 134 open top service started Saturday 29 May 2021 and will run, weather permitting, Monday-Saturday from 0900 to 1745 each day until 30 August. On Sunday 30 May, 500, PL51 LDJ, was used as a promotional tool in conjunction for Octopus Ahoj, an art trail in Clacton, parked up for a family fun day at Marine Parade East. Clacton Breeze is being heavily marketed as part of Clacton Rocks, an appeal for visitors and to encourage the staycation holiday this year. As such 500 has received further vinyls over its East Yorkshire original livery promoting the Octopus Ahoj trail dates with a prominent Octopus in blue around the bus plus orange promotions. From 28 May (last day before half term holiday), Covid school duplicates ceased as Year 11s had completed exams and were free to leave school providing all assessments were up to date (TLA C, 19B and 95A).



Fares Travel all day!

Adult	£3.90	Under 19s
Family	£5.80*	£1 per ride

*Includes 10 rides. 2nd & 3rd adults £1.00 each

Times Mondays to Saturdays* (See timetables)

Initial on Sea, Whiting Way	0900	0930	10	30	0930	1030
Clacton, Rail Station	0910	0940	10	40	1000	1040
Clacton Pier (Return)	0920	0950	10	50	1010	1040
Initial on Sea, Whiting Way	1030	1100	11	30	1100	1130

*Please check our Twitter page for July updates @hedinghambuses

Celebrating 150 years of Clacton

CLACTON ROCKS

A ride on the Clacton Breeze is included within the Clacton Rocks ticket zone!

For more information on the Clacton Rocks zone, please visit the Clacton Rocks website.

Please wear a face covering when riding on our buses.

For contactless, see the Apple App Store or Google Play.

www.hedingham.cb.uk/clactonbreeze

A trip to Clacton isn't complete without a ride on an **open top bus** - It's the best way to see the sights!

From 29th May 2021

Clacton BREEZE

Step onboard at Clacton Pier

A classic holiday treat you simply won't want to miss!

Great family day out for only £5.80 return

Hop on, hop off any Hedingham bus in the Clacton Rocks zone and make the most of your day out

www.hedingham.cb.uk/clactonbreeze

by **Richard Delahoy** with thanks to the Companies and the Stephenson's / NIBS Buses / Galloway Facebook Group

Stephenson's Dart 456 (GU52 HJX, currently on loan to NIBS) will be withdrawn upon MOT expiry in June and donate its engine to 457 (NK55 KBU) in the NIBS fleet.

As well as 631 noted last month, 639 (YN55 NJK), another Scania double-decker, is also on loan to sister company Galloway to free up coaches (which were being used for school duplication in Essex) which are once again now being used on excursion and tour work.

In the opposite direction, Galloway 205 (YJ60 GFA), an MCV bodied VDL SB180, has been noted in Bury St Edmunds on the Stephenson's 'Breeze' town services, e.g., on 21 May, and earlier, sister 204 (YJ60 GDO) on 9 May, in both cases between morning and afternoon school duplication work.

School duplication has continued, sometimes with Galloway service buses rather than coaches, for example 203 (AV09 BVC) a VDL SB200 / Plaxton Centro was noted on a 38S working on 13 May and in Brentwood on 21st and Solo 332 (YJ65EWF) in Braintree on 6 May.

Whilst we don't ordinarily cover operations at the associated Galloway Travel, it's worth mentioning that limited National Express operations are expected to restart from 21 June after a relatively long period when the eight Scania / Caetano Levante 3 coaches have been laid up.

Below: **Steven Quay's** stunning night shot captures Stephenson's 413, SK07 HLN, in Ashingdon Road at the Canewdon Road stop on 24 March 2021 working the evening Essex CC contract service 7 on one of two journeys that run through from Southend to Rayleigh (as opposed to Hockley to Rayleigh short workings).



Acquired Vehicle

299 KX55 PFK Optare Solo M850, B28F, new to Stagecoach United Counties 47408 02/06

It had still been at Stagecoach's Corby depot in March this year. Repainted from Stagecoach livery to all blue with Vectare fleet names. Seen below in Brentwood High Street on its first day of service, 14 May 2021.

Chris Stewart, taken from his office window.



Services

References last month to routes 61/C should also have included Saturday 61A. During half term week, 1-4 June, the 61/C reverted to minibus operation with 201 (except 304 was in use late morning on 2nd).

History

A recent full-length article in *Coach & Bus Week* (13 April 2021) sheds some interesting light on Vectare. Founded in 2016 by young University friends Dominic Kalantary and Peter Nathaniel, the company's main operation is the provision of technology-based solutions for school transport (under the VecTive brand). Currently around 50 schools and 50 high quality operators are involved across the country. Having won the gold award in the New Horizons category of the UK Bus Awards in 2018, Vectare decided in 2019 to set up some small direct operations in order to better understand the economics and practicalities of the bus business from the front line. Several tenders were won from Nottinghamshire CC and an initial fleet of three Mercedes Sprinter / EVM Citylines bought for this purpose at a cost of £90,000 each. (One of the East Midlands services (93/B/C/X) from Bingham to Grantham is a commercial operation.) Subsequent expansion, including the setting up of the Essex operations, prompted orders for a further three such vehicles which arrived during 2020. Having also acquired Gardner Travel of Chelmsford, giving direct insight into a small coach business, four mid-life Volvo / Wrightbus buses were added to the Essex fleet enabling further knowledge of more traditional local bus operations. Regular exchange of information between local staff and Head Office enables detailed analysis of costs and pricing, with that knowledge then being applied across the wider sphere of the solutions business. (With thanks to Robert Appleton for alerting us to the article.)

A full list of the Mercedes Sprinter / EVMs is 200-205 (WN69 FYL, RX20 RJV, WV20 VDG, RX20 RDV, RX70 SKZ and RE70 EZU).

Other Operators

by **Roger A Smith** with thanks to Richard Delahoy,
Alex Hazell and the PSV Circle

Acme Bus, Molehill Green

X173 BNH, a Mercedes Benz 0814D with C32FL Plaxton body, is reported here from Quick, Ludgvan, Cornwall.

Arrow, Maldon

RX67 OPU, an Atlas bodied 16 seat Mercedes Benz 516CDI minibus, is here from Hallmark, London.

Don's, Dunmow

DK60 AHO, an 11.3m ADL Enviro 200, B40F, was acquired from Ensignbus in March 2020. It is in fleet livery and named 'Toby'. It was previously with, and new to, Halton Transport. DH21 DON, a Mercedes Benz Tourismo C61 FLT, is reported as new here.

L & R Transport Services (Bourne & Cantwell), Wickford

... ceased by March 2021 upon revocation of their operator's licence. They had four vehicles authorised, but we have no information on their closing fleet. It is understood all vehicles are gone from here. Their Neoplan N66 SUN was illustrated in EBN 675, July 2020 and below is their Volvo B10M / Plaxton K20 LNR at Southend Victoria Station on rail replacement on 27 January 2018. New to Wallace Arnold as N235 HWX, it was subsequently registered LW 311, N142 LAT and N555 KLB before acquiring the LNR mark (**Richard Delahoy**).

M&M Staffing, Cooksmill Green

Neoplan C51FT bodied MAN N22163 PA66 LFX, has gone to Holmeswood Coaches, Holmeswood, Lancashire. A second Neoplan Tourliner coach, MM18 BUS, has now been converted to full PSVAR specification, joining MM68 BUS. See photo on inside front cover. They continue to have all-white Wrightbus StreetLite SN68 AGF on loan from a dealer, for Arriva Southend school duplication and rail replacement.

Ronda Coaches (Rodney Hallums), Southend

... has ceased operations with the retirement of the owner. Established in 1969, the operator had a licence for four vehicles but only two were thought to be operated latterly, a 1997 Mercedes-Benz Nouvelle and an Iveco Maxim.

SBC Engineering, Leigh-on-Sea

Caetano C56FLT bodied Volvo B11R(T) BV17 GVD, is here from Go North East.



South East Coaches, Wickford

YJ12 CKC, a Van Hool CH52/5FT, previously with Eavesway, Ashton-in Makerfield, Greater Manchester, has been re-registered as K123 SEC.

Thorns of Rayleigh, Benfleet

Note change of Operating Centre, now Unit 1B, Rawreth Industrial Estate, Rawreth Lane, Rayleigh SS6 9RL.

General

There hasn't been a great deal of news to report in recent months. The pandemic has had a devastating affect with new bus sales down by 26% since 2019 and new coach sales down by a staggering 70% over the same period. Many coach operators are struggling to survive whilst others have gone out of business, meaning that the market for new and used coaches has collapsed. Also, the residual value of used coaches has declined sharply, meaning that operators are reluctant to invest in new vehicles due to the low value of any trade ins.

Below: Peter Godward Coaches AC17 PGC, an Irizar i6 now converted to be PSVAR compliant with side lift, in Witham Railway Station car park on rail replacement on Sunday 2 May 2021. **Roger A Smith**



Ensignbus
omnibus suppliers to the world

by Mark Lloyd

with thanks to Ross Newman & Richard Delahoy

Ensignbus Fleet

Ex ADL prototype / development vehicle Enviro 200 B29F has been acquired. Registered E17 SGN, fleet number 601, chassis number SFD1L1AR7CGY13409, route branded for 99. The registration was previously worn by Ensign's Volvo FH12 recovery truck.

Route 68

Southend seafront service 68 is to feature in a new TV series on Channel 5 in June featuring Scottish comedian Susan Calman ("Calman at the Seaside"); filming was taking place on 23 May for a programme about Southend. This service faced significant delays over the Whitsun Bank Holiday weekend (29-31 May) as Southend became gridlocked with cars carrying day trippers attracted by the very good weather. At times, buses were being forced to divert eastbound away from the seafront, via Crowstone Road, Station Road, past the Cliffs Pavilion, Cambridge Road, Alexandra St, Heygate Ave (past the Travel Centre) then round the side of the Seaway car park via Herbert Grove, Lucy Rd and Hartington Rd and omitting the Kursaal loop. Even so, journey times were significantly extended. One bus that didn't divert took 85 minutes from leaving the Pier to arriving back there before the Kursaal loop - this normally takes 46 minutes. Indeed, the mile and a half from Chalkwell Shelter to the Pier, normally 7 minutes, took 32! It's next trip, 1406 from the Pier still took 79 minutes even with the diversion in place, against the scheduled 56 minutes.

Blind Spot

by Richard Delahoy

This interesting Eastern National blind is reproduced courtesy of **Transport Auctions London**, in whose May 2021 sale it was sold for £70 (plus buyer's premium). The top part is missing so there is no header info, but it would appear to be from one of the 1400-17



series of dual-purpose Bristol MW saloons which had deep two-line blind boxes. Some displays are local to Bishop's Stortford depot but there is a fascinating range of other places. Preserved 217 MHK (480, later 1402) **left** shows the style, albeit fitted with a different blind to that illustrated here. Basildon Bus Rally, 25 June 2017. **Richard Delahoy**

The missing top section would most likely have included Private, Private Hire Service, possibly Works Service and maybe Eastern National and Coach/Air Service.

We'd welcome members' comments.

The photos below show 1251 EV with one of the displays illustrated (**Frank Church**) and 2738 VX with another (**R Delahoy** collection).



HOSPITAL
SERVICE
EXCURSION
BASILDON
BILLERICAY
BISHOP'S
STORTFORD
BISHOP'S STORTFORD
HARLOW NEW TOWN
BRADWELL
BRAINTREE
BRAINTREE
HALSTEAD
BRENTWOOD
BRENTWOOD
STATION
BURNHAM
CHELMSFORD
CLACTON

CLACTON
JAYWICK SANDS
COLCHESTER
DEBDEN
DUNMOW
FELIXSTOWE
FELSTED
GT. BARDFIELD
GT. BURSTEAD
HALSTEAD
HARLOW
NEW TOWN
HATFIELD
BROAD OAK
HAVERS ESTATE
HENHAM
KENT ELMS
CORNER
LANGLEY
LOWER GREEN
LANGLEY
UPPER GREEN
LONDON
[BOW]
LONDON
[EUSTON]
LONDON
[VICTORIA]

LONDON
[WOOD GREEN]
LOWESTOFT
YARMOUTH
MALDON
ONGAR
PARSONAGE
ESTATE
RAYLEIGH
ROMFORD
SAFFRON
WALDEN
SHENFIELD
STATION
SILVER END
SOUTHEND
[TYLERS AVENUE]
SOUTHEND
[VICTORIA CIRCUS]
SOUTH WOODHAM
THAXTED
TILBURY FERRY
TOTTENHAM
[BROAD LANE]
WALTON
WICKFORD
WITHAM

Information Fails to Impress

Whilst chasing First Essex 69421 in its new livery on 8 April for our cover photo for EBN 684, **Richard Delahoy** stumbled across a rather shocking example of misleading information.

I was at Broomfield Hospital, where there are a series of bus stops right outside the entrance including this bus stop flag and real time display. Good so far - BUT is the information correct? Let's look at the detail:



Bus stop flag tiles:

Route 16 - yes, still runs, operated by Stephenson's
Route 52 - was renumbered 10/10A from 29 August 2017
Route 70 - yes, still runs, operated by First
Route 70X - withdrawn from 10 October 2015
Route 344 - withdrawn from 1 September 2017
Route 352 - still runs to Halstead, Mon-Sat evenings by Hedingham
Route H2 'Town circular' - replaced by First 40 & 47 from 11 January 2014.
And finally, the National Rail double arrow symbol? Trains don't stop here, nor do rail replacement buses! The nearest station is of course Chelmsford, nearly 4 miles away. I can only assume that the sign is intended to mean that buses from this stop go to the rail station.

Then the real time screen: 703 is - or rather was - the shuttle from the Chelmer Valley Park & Ride site to the Hospital, operated by Essex CC's in-house UgoBus unit. But the service has not run for more than a year now and was deregistered from 31 March 2021, as we reported in EBN 684. So how can the screen be programmed to still offer a regular service? Complete nonsense! About the only redeeming feature is that since the shuttle doesn't exist, no-one

could have arrived at the Hospital on it, so no-one is likely to be misled in expecting it to return them to the (then closed) P&R site.

But to have so many basic errors, some going back over seven years, is inexcusable. I e-mailed Essex CC's Public Transport Unit later the same day and received a reply the next, saying they would contact the infrastructure team "to see if they can remove the stickers" and asking the RPTI team to remove the erroneous 703 data. I don't have any reason to go back to Broomfield any time soon, so I wonder if any of our local members could have a look to see if and when these information fails get fixed?

Getting the basics of customer information right is not rocket science but is key to encouraging more use of bus services. This kind of nonsense doesn't help!
Thanks to Peter Clark of the Omnibus Society for help with dates of various service changes.

Blind Confusion

Whilst there, I also spotted a First 42 arriving with an interesting display on its LED blind. This is another example of out-of-date information - the display 'for 352 Halstead' was used on Sundays when First ran an ECC contract 352 from Broomfield Hospital to Halstead that started commercially from Chelmsford as a 42. That arrangement ceased from the end of March 2020 and now on Sundays the service runs as a 42B all the way to Halstead, part subsidised by ECC. Perhaps the driver's duty card has the wrong destination code on it?



42 is in fact a particularly complex and interesting route. It forms a key cross-city service from Galleywood, through central Chelmsford and on to Broomfield Hospital, now (from 12 April) running every 10 minutes on Monday to Friday. But journeys continue hourly to Gt Dunmow & Stansted Airport as 42A and half-hourly to Braintree as 42B, with the other 3 an hour terminating at the Hospital. Saturday buses are every 12 minutes, hourly on to the Airport and to Braintree.

On Sundays, the 42A is extended beyond Stansted to Bishops Stortford and the 42B beyond Braintree to Halstead, in both cases with ECC support and each running every 2 hours. With hourly short workings to / from the Hospital, the core cross-city section runs every 30 minutes on Sundays in an interesting example of complex but efficient scheduling to serve various needs.

Letters

Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit from Cornwall

ENOC KSW 2331 & An Island Query

I enjoyed seeing the picture of Bristol KSW 2331 delicensed in Maldon depot yard in last month's EBN, as this bus played an important part in my life. As well as spending many happy hours conducting and driving her in service, she was also one of the two Driver Training vehicles allocated to Chelmsford. We didn't have the advantage of a big blue bus, specifically converted for driver tuition, with safety features. 2331, or Bristol LD5G 2480 (540 HVX) would be taken out of service after the morning peak, 'L' plates fitted, and the bulkhead window, between the cab and the saloon, removed, using a T key to unlock it. Our dear old instructor, Jim Ager, would take up his position, on the front offside seat of 2331, or kneeling on the rearward facing bench seat on 2480. From there he would shout his instructions and, sometimes, admonishments, to the trainee. He could not reach any of the controls, so if an incident occurred, the recruit was on his own. I have vivid memories of hill starts in Southborough Road ("If you roll back like that on your test, you'll fail!"), and using the gearbox to stop the bus whilst descending Wood Street. ("I want you to stop at the hospital bus stop, and don't you dare touch that brake"). One of my favourite memories was having passed my test, he took me out on Bristol FLF type training, using semi-auto 2888. He gave me clear instructions, and good advice. On return to the depot he said, "I've never driven a semi, what's it like?". What a true gentleman he was, in both aspects of that word, and I have endeavoured to drive to his standards ever since.

When I was about 6 or 7 years old (early 1950s) we had a family outing, a 'continental' day trip to the exotic Canvey Island. It was probably at Eastern National's expense, using a Depot Day Pass. I don't recall the full details, but we probably caught a service 4(34) from Chelmsford to Pitsea, and then on to South Benfleet. I do remember having a short walk, to where some double-deck buses were drawn up on a parking ground, with their backs to the Thames. They were probably ex City or Westcliff vehicles, in Eastern National green, but I was too young to realise the importance of them. I have seen pictures of buses at this spot. Apparently, the island buses were prevented from crossing the railway for some reason, and it was not until the roadway was lowered under Benfleet station, that through running between the mainland and the island was possible (February 1962). My query is this, and hopefully one of our historians, or someone even older than me, with a good memory, can answer. How did double-decker buses get on to the island in the first place, or get off for heavy dock or repaint, and if that was possible, why was there no through running? Thank you in anticipation.

Below: We don't have a photo of 2331 as a driver trainer, but here is Basildon's 2347 (itself a former Chelmsford vehicle) outside its home garage operating as such. It was allocated to BN between May 1965 and May 1969, so photo taken during this period.

Bill Cansick



Two more stories from Doug re his time as a driver at Brentwood Eastern National garage between 1962 and 1968. His previous story, 'A Spooky Tale' was in EBN 679.

(1) A Fishy Tale

Bus crews have always been held responsible for the money they collect for fares, whether as a conductor or a one-person operator, with 'shorts' being deducted from their wages. At times when the cash office at Brentwood was not staffed, conductors on late shifts had to pay their takings into a night safe. This was a drawer with a hinged door at the front - the takings were put into a cloth bag which was put in the drawer. As the drawer was pushed in, the bottom of the drawer fell back, dropping the cash bag onto the safe floor. The cash bag was a linen bag secured by an elastic band.

However, sometimes conductors were told that they had paid in short, £5 or even £10, after their bag had been opened and counted the next morning. As wages were only about £16 with overtime, this caused a lot of bad feeling and the cashiers were accused of stealing, even after the driver had counted the cash with his conductor to vouch for him or her before it was put into the night safe. But still the shortages from night pay ins went on.

Then one year at the end of British Summer Time, an Inspector had forgotten to put his clock back and as a result, came to work an hour and a half early, only to find the depot shunter at the night safe drawer with a conductor's cash bag. The Inspector asked what he was doing, "Fishing", he replied. It would seem that the shunter was a deep-sea fisherman and realised that if he put a line and hook into the part open night safe drawer, he could hook one of the linen bags and carefully pull it out. Then he could remove some of the cash before putting the bag back into the safe.

The Inspector told him to go home and stay there, because if he ever came back to the garage, he would be lynched. When the news got out, feelings were running high and a posse of conductors went to the Superintendent's office asking for the shunter's address, but the Superintendent would not tell them. It was known that the shunter lived somewhere in Harold Hill and four conductors in a car used to patrol the area looking for him, but he was never seen again - and nor was their stolen money.

These days most bus depots have automatic coin counting machines that provide a receipt whilst the driver is present, meaning that any shorts or overs are identified immediately (and offices are usually covered by CCTV as well).

(2) A Soldier's Tale

We had a cleaner at Brentwood by the name of Percy who was a character. His whole working day was centred around the Army. He could not walk anywhere without shouting "Quick March", "Halt", "Stand at Ease", "To the bus go". Us drivers and conductors used to play up to him and if the time allowed, we would march with him. Percy was in his element, his broom was a rifle and he dropped the metal ticket box to resemble a foot stamp. One Sunday morning Perc had about 20 of us on the march up and down the garage which

he called 'church parade'. Perc was in full throttle, broom and ticket box were in use all the time, then suddenly two police cars came into the garage at speed with blue lights flashing. Two policemen got out of each car, but they could not talk to us because of their laughter. When they restrained themselves, they said that they had had a phone call from neighbours in the next street wanting to know if World War 3 had started. Perc was told to keep his voice down, but from that time on we were demobbed, and all drill stopped.



Above: Illustrating Brentwood depot in the 1960s, with the open-air swimming pool behind, is Bristol FLF / ECW 2748 with an LD alongside. **Chris Stewart collection.** This bus is preserved.

Richard Delahoy's article 'Bus Spotting in the Digital Age' in EBN 685 certainly struck a chord with me. It was very relevant to me, because I had been trying to see Ipswich Buses 2 (SN57 DDF), a Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus, during May. It was hired in from Ensignbus in March this year, and initially worked on Ipswich town services. Mark Pitman photographed it in Ipswich in March, his photo is in 'Terminus' issue 445, April 2021. Then at the end of April, 2 disappeared from Bustimes. I did not see it on school contracts at East Bergholt High School or Holbrook Academy. It is not used on Ipswich School contracts as it is not fitted with seat belts. Later I was fortunate to see it a couple of times cruising along the A12 going north from Colchester on service RC1. So, I thought it worth trying to photograph this bus in Essex. However, at Thorington Crossroads the sun would be behind the bus early in the morning for the journey to Suffolk Rural College, and behind the bus for the late afternoon journey from Suffolk Rural College. I was not sure of the exact route in Colchester, it goes near to Highwoods, but does not serve the Highwoods bus stops. So, I thought that Wivenhoe would be good for the afternoon journey, because the bus would be heading south if it was sunny. However, when I went to Wivenhoe on 20 May, there were lots of roadworks with fencing and bollards etc., so it was difficult to find a good spot for a photo. I therefore decided on a timetabled stop at Wivenhoe, The Flag. But it was difficult to photograph the bus at the bus stop because of cars coming out of a side road blocking my view. I decided instead to photograph the bus slowing for this bus stop. The photo worked, and the destination display came out. And there was no sun to worry about! So, I achieved my objective to photograph Ipswich Buses 2 in Essex and the result is shown on this page.

Thanks to Richard also for all the information in various EBNs about the Arriva school duplicates in Southend. Nothing like this has occurred in southeast Suffolk. I see Ipswich Buses almost full double-deckers heading to East Bergholt High School and Holbrook Academy, but no extra duplicate journeys. School children are supposed to sit in their year groups on the buses, but I don't know if this happens.



This month a summary of the services and buses working into Essex.

Clacton - Mistley 2/A, Stanway Tollgate Sainsburys - Hythe Tesco 4, Colchester North Station - Highwoods Circular 11

Normally worked by three of the four 8.9m long ADL Enviro 200s: 70/73 (YX59 BZL/N), 71/72 (LX58 LMO/M). Any of the four remaining Optare Versas also work these routes: 148/149/150/152 (YK08 EPE/F/I/V). If a longer 10.8m ADL Enviro 200 is used, this tends to be from 77 (KX59 GNY), 82 (YX63 LGF), 84 (MX09 HHS) or 101 (SN16 OGG), because the other non-seat belt fitted Enviro 200s now have route branding for Ipswich town services. 2/A operates Monday - Saturday, 4/11 operate Monday - Friday.

Ipswich - Manningtree 92, Ipswich - Colchester 93/A

On Mondays to Fridays the all-day duty on 92 is a Scania OmniCity. The two all day duties on 93/A are normally worked by two of the three Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekkas: 60/61/62 (PJ54 YZT/U/V). The third Scania OmniDekka normally works a duty that includes 1610 Suffolk One College - Ipswich - Manningtree 92, 1720 Manningtree - Ipswich 92. If an OmniDekka is not available, then a Scania OmniCity is used. A fourth bus works 1610 Suffolk One College - Colchester 93, 1715 Colchester - Ipswich 93. These journeys have some variety, normally a DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlander, sometimes an OmniCity or an Enviro 200. On 20/21/25 May 54 (PF04 WML), the solitary VDL DB250/East Lancs Lowlander, was used (the other DB250 are DAFs). On Saturdays, services 92/93 are single deck, either Enviro 200 or Versas are used.

Langham - Boxted - East Bergholt High School 194

Worked by a DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlander. 55 (PN52 XBO) has been the regular bus on this service since the new school term started on 12 April.

Suffolk Rural College contract RC1

Thorrington Crossroads - Alresford - Wivenhoe - Colchester, then non-stop to Suffolk Rural College, Otley.

In March 2021 Ipswich Buses hired in from Ensignbus SN57 DDF, an ex-Lothian Buses Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse B38F. In Lothian Buses livery, numbered 2 by Ipswich Buses. Initially used on Ipswich town services, during May, 2 became the regular performer on RC1. See photos opposite. In the past an Enviro 200 or Versa have worked RC1.

Ipswich School contracts (all buses used fitted with seatbelts)

2A from Feering (New Lane) and Colchester (Tollgate).

2B from Colchester (Braiswick), Boxted and Langham.

3 from Dedham and Dedham Heath.

10 from Holland-on-Sea and Tendring.

The acquired Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekka 63 (YN06 TFZ) (see EBN685 p21) had become the regular bus on route 2A up to 14 May but is now off the road for accident damage repairs. Therefore, one of three Scania OmniCities 46/47/48 (SGZ 3346/7/8) is used. Route 3 is always one of the 8.9m long Enviro 200s 70/71/72/73, due to the narrow roads around Dedham Heath. Routes 2B and 10 are worked by two of three 10.8m long Enviro 200s 74 (DU60 LOJ) 75 (GD10 MVM) 76 (LX58 LML).

A new Asda Superstore opened at North Shoebury in December 1981 which these days is served by Arriva routes 1, 7, 8 and 9.

DO YOUR SHOPPING AT THE NEW ASDA SUPERSTORE AT NORTH SHOEBURY

From Monday 7th December 1981 Services 4B and 7 will be re-routed to operate via the ASDA store.

Service 5 passes the North Shoebury Road store entrance.

*TRAVEL DIRECT ON YOUR
LOCAL BUS SERVICES*

SOUTHEND & DISTRICT
JOINT SERVICES

D is for Duplication, and Dalston - but not for Drinks

The letter D was the designation given to the Southend to London express service between 1953 and early 1962 (at which point it became the X10). Originally a Westcliff Motor Services route originating in the 1920s, it was a seasonal operation until 1955 when it became all year round. Starting from the small Pier Hill coach station in Southend, it ran to Victoria Coach Station, running up the A13 out of Southend and through Hadleigh, then on the A127 and A12 towards London, taking coaches past the Fortune of War pub at Laidon, the scene of this month's photos.

The route was very busy at times and required duplication, in the late 1950s / early 1960s even Southend Corporation Albion Aberdonian single deckers and lowbridge Leyland PD2s were used at times to help Eastern National out, in the days before it gained an hourly headway, having become the X10 from April 1962. Hence our first D, for **D**uplication.

The second D marks that the route included a stop at **D**alston, but the third D - **D**rinks? Well no, or are least not normally. With an end to end running time of just under two and a half hours, there was no refreshment stop included and no real need for one.

And so to our pictures. In the first two photos, on the right we have the service car, Bristol LS coach E1N 639, new to Westcliff but now numbered as Eastern National 363, with Bristol LS bus 570 CTW, EN 404, on the left as the duplicate, en route for Southend. They are parked on the forecourt of the Fortune of War and some passengers have alighted to avail themselves of the tea and snack bar seen on the end of the pub. Arguably the running time between the last London area stop at Wanstead High Street and the first set down at Basildon Jolly Cricketers (Nevendon really) of 55 minutes was perhaps a tad excessive, but we're not aware that a refreshment stop was ever taken.

But from the bottom photo taken on what we think was the same occasion, there may be a clue. Frank photographed Bristol LD 1509, 538 HVX, here on the 2A service, parked at the side of the A127 right alongside the pub car park, with the driver leaning over to the side, while a police motorcycle is parked a short distance in front and a car directly behind which might also be a police vehicle. All of which leads me to think that there was an incident of some kind blocking the road, and hence the two vehicles on the D have pulled into the pub car park and the drivers have allowed the passengers to get off until the road is reopened, whilst the LD is stopped on the main carriageway. And look at the appalling amount of litter in the pub car park, a popular stop for motorists and coaches on a day trip to Sarfend.

The Lodekka has a comprehensive three-part blind display, the destination just reading 'Southend' - no qualifying point specified, the terminus was at Victoria Circus - and the passing point screen showing "Basildon / West Horndon Station / Cranham". Alternate journeys operated either via West Horndon Station or via Homefields Garage on the A127 at Little Warley, but all used the same route number. 2A was rather a misnomer for this Southend to Romford service, as it had nothing in common with the 2 & 2B west of Vange and it was later renumbered 15/15A/15B, before being largely absorbed into the 26 and 151.

From the age of the vehicles and the style of the fleet and depot plates (all three vehicles carry the red circle, denoting Southend depot), the picture can be dated to 1956-58. Note also the fleet names on 404 and 1509, in equal height letters, the style used before the more familiar underlined version was introduced, although 363 does have an underlined Westcliff name. In a future issue we'll take a look at those fleet name styles with a selection of detail photos that Frank took.

Photo Captions

Rear Cover: StreetLites and bridges.

Top: the shuttle bus operation on route 20 from 11-15 May 2021 is described on page 15. Here First Essex 47646 passes under the 12' clearance railway bridge on the Great Eastern line in Hambro Hill on 14 May 2021 before ascending the hill. The bridge has claimed various bus scalps in previous years, most recently 33189 in November 2018, which lost its roof and was scrapped, but in earlier years, both an FLF and a VR came to grief there. A photo of the FLF is at <http://www.sct61.org.uk/en2771> and was also in EBN 542, June 2009, page 21, the bus was 1648 (later 2771).

Bottom: Going back a year to last June. Arriva Southend received four Wright StreetLites from Northfleet garage in exchange for the temporary loan of four Enviro 400s to Gillingham; initially in store, all four saloons were put into service for the 15 June 2020 service enhancements (which were a result of the easing of some of the first lockdown restrictions and followed the reductions which had been introduced at the end of March). They were in Sapphire livery with branding for the 480/490. All four were returned to Northfleet over the weekend of 27-28 June 2020.

Demonstrating why service 8 needs single deckers, 4328 (SK68 TWZ) emerges from under the low railway bridge on the Great Eastern line in Rectory Road, Hawkwell on 16 June 2020. The road has a 90-degree turn under the bridge, hence the need for traffic light control. Now signed at just 13' 6", in Southend Transport days the bridge was OK for low-height double deck operation.

Both **Richard Delahoy**





ESSEX BUS NEWS

Issue 686

June 2021

Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964