

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 721 May 2024



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



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New Southland Open Top Route 999



Essex Bus Magazine the journal of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

Issue 721

May 2024



Ensignbus's new open top route 99 from Southend Pier to Shoeburyness East Beach commenced operation on 4 May 2024. As reported last month, four Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Geminis have been acquired from First Eastern Counties and converted to open top. They are being painted into four different ice cream themed liveries (hence the route number) featuring the famous Rossi Ice Cream. On the first day, 'Mint Chocolate Cabriolet' 365 (37406, MX58 DXT) was in service, with 'Strawberry Streamliner' 364 (37405, MX58 DXS) parked at the pier. The other two were not yet ready. On the second day of the route, 5th, 364 was used.

All photos taken on 4 May.

Front Cover: 365 at Shoebury Common, The Shore House on its way to Shoeburyness. **Richard Delahoy**

Inside Front Cover. Top: 364 (not in service) turning from Chalkwell Avenue on to Chalkwell Esplanade, taken from 365. **John G Lidstone**
Bottom: 365 passing 364 at the Pier, arriving after its first journey from Shoeburyness. At the end of journeys from Shoeburyness, the 99 has to go along the seafront as far as the Genting Casino to turn round. **Richard Delahoy**

Above: 365 approaching the pier bridge on a return journey from Shoeburyness.

Right: Signage at the pier, with 364 in the background.
Both **Richard Delahoy**



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any month, but subscriptions will always run to
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EBM Extra

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

Membership Records & Data Protection

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

Reports, Articles & Photographs

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

Target Dates for EBM 722

Reports to Sub-Editors **25 May**

Sub-Editor drafts to Editor **31 May**

Dispatch by Printers on or before **8 June**

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent
up to 1 June and will be included if possible, if not it
will be held over to the next month.

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

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Group Notices

Welcome to New Members

Kristian Burton, Clacton - 1226

Adam Hiley, Upminster - 1227

Deaths

We are sorry to report the recent deaths of two members, Mike (F E M) Allen, Colchester (member 274) and Clive Hutt, Billericay (member 794).

We were also sorry to learn of the death of Peter Godward, director and co-founder of Basildon operator Peter Godward Coaches, on 1 April aged 81. Peter Godward Coaches was founded by Mr Godward and his father Ron in 1967 as G and G Coaches, with a Bedford OB that cost £75 as its first vehicle. The business's current name was taken up in around 1990 after Mr Godward Senior's death. Peter Godward's son John now runs the business, Peter having taken semi-retirement in 2021. Photos of Peter Godward Coaches vehicles have featured in EBN/M over the years, and particularly in 2020 and 2021 during the pandemic when they helped out on Arriva school extras.

Our condolences go to Mike, Clive and Peter's family and friends.

Group Meetings

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

11 May	Ian Barlex - Lost independents in England, Wales and Scotland during the past ten years.
8 June	Ian Ransom - Buses through the ages.

Further dates for 2024 are **14 September, 12 October, 9 November** and **14 December**. Please note there are not meetings in July or August.

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

Annual General Meeting

The 56th Annual General Meeting of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group will be held at **The Quaker Meeting House**, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford (details above) on **Saturday 11 May**, commencing at 1330 (note this is 60 minutes before the normal meeting start time). There will be a brief presentation from the Committee on the current and future plans of the group.

Group Visits

Heddingham

By kind invitation of Robert MacGregor and Daniel Butterfield of Go Ahead, we have been invited to visit Sible Heddingham depot on 16 June 2024, for a tour lasting about 60 minutes. The visit will allow time to photograph vehicles and a visit to the office built by Robert's father in the 1970s. Robert and Daniel will then give a short talk and take questions on Heddingham, both as a family business and since corporate Go Ahead days. The tour is restricted to 20 people (EBEG members only) and will require you to make your own way to and from Sible Heddingham. Spaces are still available, so those that have already booked are assured a place. Please contact Ian Ransom (details on page 2) if you would like to be part of this visit.

Canvey Island Transport Museum

The visit will open with a 'welcome' at 1030 and formally close at 1600. Entry is free to EBEG members but the Museum is a registered charity and relies on donations from visitors and benefactors to fund its work. Entry will be exclusively via wristband sent in advance. Parking will be available, a free bus will depart from Benfleet Station, just after 1010 to meet trains from London Liverpool Street and Shoeburyness, plus connections with First Essex buses

(routes 22 and 27 also stop outside the museum). A bus will return to Benfleet Station at the conclusion of the event.

Throughout the day, vehicle owners will be on hand to show members around their vehicles and discuss their history and the finer points of ownership and preservation. Also, several owners will be making their vehicles available during the day for short outings around the island with stops for photography. Details of vehicles available to ride on will be released later - probably on arrival at the event as this list will undoubtedly be subject to change and will rely on vehicles being roadworthy on the day. Hot and cold drinks and snacks / light lunch will be available. The Museum will have a sales stall for used books, models etc. Bookings must be made by Friday 31 May via Ian Ransom (details on page 2).

The Running Card

Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Saturday 11 May: Delaine Museum Open Day (including heritage bus rides), Bourne. 1200-1600.

Saturday 11-Sunday 12 May: 1960s Weekend, 1100 - 1700 both days. A weekend of everything 1960s, the museum is hoping to find people to bring some vehicles from the 1960s to display. East Anglia Transport Museum, Carlton Colville.

Sunday 12 May: Vintage Bus Day. Mid Norfolk Railway, Dereham.

Sunday 19 May: Fenland Busfest. Whittlesey. **EVENT CANCELLED** due to lack of entries but a bus display is to be held at Ramsay Rural Museum / Classic Car Show.

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

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

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

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

Sunday 14 July: Eastbourne Classic Bus Running Day based at the Railway Station.

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

Sunday 28 July: Classic buses in Windsor.

Sunday 28 July: Worthing Seafront Gathering.

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

Right: The Delaine Heritage Running Day held at Bourne on 27 April 2024 has previously been advertised in 'The Running Card'. Here is London Bus Company's RT1658 (KXW 304) at the event, it had travelled from Epping that morning.

Paul Harvey



Items For Sale

The following are available, please e-mail Owen Woodliffe, the Sales Officer at pat_woodliffe@hotmail.com. To save on postage, items can be collected at Chelmsford meetings by prior arrangement with Owen.

City Catfile by Alan Osborne £2 plus £1 p&p

Essex Bus fleet book 1989 £1 plus £1 p&p

75 Years of service in Essex 1930-2005 First Essex £3 plus £2.50 p&p

Eastern National 1930-45 Fleet History PSV Circle £5 plus £3.50 p&p

Westcliff on Sea in Focus by P. Snell / A. Osborne £2 plus £1 p&p

Eastern National in Focus by Derek Stebbing £2 plus £1 p&p

Eastern National Silver Jubilee 1955 Donald MacGregor £2 plus £1 p&p

Buses in Basildon 1970 OS £1 plus £1 p&p

Eastern National Past and Present D.G Bell £5 plus £3.50 p&p

Transfer of ENOC Grays Area Services to LT Alan Osborne £2 plus £1 p&p

The Years Between; Eastern National Story Crawley et al £5 plus £3.50 p&p.

The Borough Services Ltd - New Booklet

Borough Services was an independent operator in the Southend area that started running buses in 1927 and was bought by Eastern National in 1933 but retained as a separate company until wound up in 1940. Its best known route was Southend to Grays, shared with Westcliff Motor Services.

Omnibus Society and EBEG member Peter Clark has written a booklet charting the history of the business. It's a fascinating read, spanning as it does the near free-for-all that applied prior to the 1930 Road Traffic Act and then the abrupt transition to the regulated market that lasted until the 1980s. The booklet is being published by the Omnibus Society's Provincial Historic Research Group (PHRG) and will be sent automatically to all members of that Group. Peter is keen to share his research with EBEG members and he and the PHRG have generously agreed to a special arrangement for EBEG members. The distribution is a bit different to our usual processes:

For all members for whom we have an e-mail address (not just those who take EBM electronically), a pdf copy will be e-mailed to you by EBEG. Then, having seen the booklet, if you would like a printed copy, please contact the PHRG - David Grimmett, davidgrimmett@btconnect.com, who will mail you a printed copy free of charge.

If we do not have an e-mail address for you, a printed copy will be automatically posted out to you later this month.

The booklet only contains outline details of the Borough fleet, but the June issue of the PSV Circle's Historic Journal will include a full fleet history; copies can be bought from the Circle.

We hope these arrangements will meet with members' approval and would like to express our grateful thanks to Peter and to the PHRG for facilitating this.



Number P31 in the series of booklets
produced by the
Provincial Historical Research Group

THE BOROUGH SERVICES OF SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

Peter Clark

A story that illustrates the battle to obtain licences and the turbulence in the Omnibus industry in the years before and after the introduction of the 1930 Traffic Act.



Above: AEC Regent JN 2767 with Park Royal body stands at Grays ready to return to Southend. Photo by J F Higham, courtesy of Alan Cross.

Follow Ups

March EBM Puzzle

Alan Osborne has provided the answers to the questions he posed on the mystery photo in EBM 719.

1. The person standing by the doors is my long term primary school friend the late Ted Ringrose, a keen railway enthusiast.
2. The person walking towards him is Laurie Murphy, who later became Eastern National Enthusiasts Group member number 1.
3. The location is the former garage of A. W. Berry & Sons (established 1888) at 7/8 Victoria Place, Brightlingsea. Taken over by Eastern National on 18 February 1937 with new services 75C, 75D, 77A, 77B and 78 (see leaflets **opposite** page). The garage was used by EN as an outstation of Colchester until 1969.
4. From the Bus Park in Colchester we walked along St. Johns Street and Osborne Street to St. Botolph's Railway Station (now Colchester Town) and boarded a recently introduced diesel multiple unit (DMU) which called at Wivenhoe and then along the branch to Brightlingsea Station. A short walk along Station Road brought us to Victoria Place. (The branch line and Brightlingsea Station closed from 15 June 1964, see **right** and **opposite bottom**. More information and a photo were in EBM Extra 5, January 2024.)
5. The date was summer 1957. Happy Days!

Below: An Eastern National Bristol LD / ECW waits to take up service on route 78 outside Brightlingsea outstation in the 1960s.

Alf Jefferies with thanks to his daughter Lynn Ballard.

EASTERN NATIONAL

**Closure of
WIVENHOE –
BRIGHTLINGSEA
railway line**

Commencing on Monday, 15th June,
1964, special replacement bus services
(74 & 74a) will operate on weekdays
calling at the Railway Stations at
Wivenhoe, Alresford and Brightlingsea

TIMETABLES OVERLEAF



A. W. BERRY & SONS, LTD.

SUMMER TIME TABLES.

**COMMENCING JUNE 1st, 1936
and until further notice**

Head Office.
PORT LANE MOTOR WORKS,
PORT LANE,
Phone: Col. 2102. COLCHESTER.

Branch Offices.
BOOKING & ENQUIRY OFFICE,
SCHEREGATE,
STANWELL STREET,
Phone: Col. 3633. COLCHESTER.

VICTORIA PLACE,
Phone: 19. BRIGHTLINGSEA.

R. Draper & Co., Printers, Brightlingsea.

TIME TABLE SERVICE
~~BY THE COMPANY~~

FOLDER No. 2592.

EASTERN NATIONAL

(Associated with the L.M.S. & L.M.E. Networks)

FOLDER OF SERVICES
previously run by

Messrs. A. W. BERRY & Sons Ltd.

Which will be operated by
THE EASTERN NATIONAL OMNIBUS CO. LTD.
as from
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18th, 1937.

The Services concerned are as follows:—

COLCHESTER—WEST MERSEA (via Abberton)
COLCHESTER—WEST MERSEA (via Rowhedge)
COLCHESTER—FINGRINGHOE (via Rowhedge)
COLCHESTER—ROWHEDGE
COLCHESTER—BRIGHTLINGSEA

The Time Table of these Services, which will be continued without alteration, are shown in this Folder in Composite Form with the existing "Eastern National" Services, thus showing together ALL SERVICES which will henceforth be operated by the Company between Common Points.

“Always at your Service!”

THE EASTERN NATIONAL OMNIBUS CO. LTD.

Local Offices:
Queen Street and
St. John's Street,
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Phone 3499.

Head Office:
NEW WHITTLE STREET,
CHELMSFORD.
Phone 3431 (3 lines).

Local Offices:
High Street,
WEST MERSEA.
Phone 17.

E.N. AD. 2092/137

Below: A timetable extract for route 74/A. There was also a Saturday service, just the 74, eight journeys from Colchester and one short from Alresford to Brightlingsea, with eight from Brightlingsea to Colchester and two short to Alresford.

SERVICES 74 74A	COLCHESTER — BRIGHTLINGSEA WIVENHOE — BRIGHTLINGSEA												SERVICES 74 74A
Light figures denote A.M. times												Dark figures denote P.M. times	
On these Services passengers will only be picked up at stops from Brightlingsea Railway Station to Brightlingsea Secondary Modern School inclusive, and will only be set down at Hythe Station Road Bus Stop, Colchester Bus Station and at Railway Stations indicated in the respective Timetables, and vice versa													
FOR OTHER SERVICES between Colchester and Brightlingsea see Services 78, 78a.													
Mondays to Fridays													
Service No.:— 74 74 74 74a 74 74 74 74 74 74													
Colchester, Omnibus Station	dep	6 5	4 20	5 15	5 35	6 15	6 50						
Alresford, Railway Station	„	6 19	7 30	4 34	5 29	5 49	6 29	7 48	4				
Wivenhoe, Railway Station	„			5 20									
Brightlingsea, Railway Station	arr	6 33	7 44	4 48	5 45	5 43	6 3	6 43	7 18	8 18			
Service No.:— 74 74 74a 74 74 74 74 74 74 74													
Brightlingsea, Railway Station	dep	6 38	7 0	7 0	7 8	7 55	5 5	5 45	6 20	7 20	8 20		
Wivenhoe, Railway Station	„			7 25									
Alresford, Railway Station	„	6 52	7 14		7 22	8 9	5 19	5 59	6 34	7 34	8 34		
Colchester, Omnibus Station	arr		7 28			8 23	5 33	6 13	6 48	7 48	8 48		

The End of the Tilbury-Gravesend Ferry?

From **Andy Gipson**

The article by Richard Delahoy in EBM 720 brought back many memories for me.

In the 1990s, I was working for Essex County Council (ECC) in their Public Transport Unit which was part of the County Planning Department. White Horse Ferries (WHF), whose registered office was in Swindon, were wishing to obtain grant support to keep the ferry going. We had several robust negotiations with them and Kent County Council. Thurrock Council were not involved as they did not become a unitary authority with responsibility for public transport until 1998. A notable meeting was shortly after Tilbury Riverside Station closed in 1992, with a certain Mr. Lay, the then owner of WHF, in a luxury penthouse overlooking the riverside in Gravesend. He and his secretary picked up our party from the Town Pier at Gravesend in his Rolls Royce, registration LAY 1.

The issue at the time was not so much about revenue support but WHF wishing to purchase a new vessel to comply with the marine rules and regulations and conditions on the River Thames. The crossing took only five minutes, but the Thames at Tilbury / Gravesend has strong tides and even in the 1990s there was a considerable amount of merchant shipping with large container ships mostly to and from Tilbury Docks. It is not a location where a large 'rowing boat' type vessel is acceptable. ECC and KCC eventually gave a grant to WHF to keep the ferry in operation for a few years; Kent gave more money as it was agreed that there was more passenger movement from and to Gravesend, this was mainly because of work journeys for Tilbury Docks. WHF subsequently purchased a new trimaran vessel, the 'Martin Chuzzlewit' in 1996. It was apparently purpose built for the ferry operation. The interesting legal issue at the time was that a ferry crossing had to be provided between Gravesend and Tilbury because of an historic law. [The background is actually covered in Peter Kay's book, referred to in the original article and the relevant extract is reproduced below]. There was also a proposal of 1886 to provide a service from Tilbury to Gravesend by tunnel. It was sanctioned but never used. The railway line to the then Gravesend West Street was built by the London, Chatham and Dover Railway in 1886. The station was renamed by British Railways (Southern) to Gravesend West in 1949. You could purchase through tickets from London and Kent to Southend-on-Sea, Clacton-on-Sea and Walton-on-Naze etc. by using the ferry.

There were originally two piers at Gravesend. The Town Pier, which was used by the ferry for passengers until the recent closure, and the West Pier, which linked directly to trains at Gravesend West. This closed to passengers in 1953, however the West Pier continued to be used by the ferry for vehicles until the opening of the first Dartford Tunnel in 1963. WHF had grand plans to start regular services up the Thames towards Woolwich, Greenwich and Central London. In hindsight they were ahead of their time as by 1996 Thames Clipper started operations with high-speed catamarans. Today they provide a river bus type frequency service operated by Uber Boat on behalf of TfL between Barking Riverside and Putney. Alas a service east of Barking has never been deemed to be an economic proposition, but the potential for the Thames to serve as a public transport corridor remains.

I mentioned Tilbury Riverside Station closing in 1992. The station housed the British Railways Staff Association Club (BRSA) which was immediately on the right side when you entered the station from the bus terminus and pedestrian / vehicle ramp area for the ferry landing stage. The BRSA club was a favourite haunt with bus crews for toilet and refreshment facilities. In the 1960s, London Transport (LT) dominated the scene, however ENOC service 40, Tilbury Ferry-Chelmsford, had 15 minutes layover at Tilbury Ferry, so the opportunity was there and taken for crews to enjoy cups of tea, a quick meat pie and sometimes stronger beverages! Staff on ENOC Services 51/53 Tilbury Ferry-Harwich / Clacton-on-Sea were not so lucky having just five minutes to layover.

I had memories with service 40 when working at ENOC Head Office, as there was a joint allocation of crews / vehicles between Brentwood (BD) and Chelmsford (CF). The custom and practise of CF was normally rigid with the same vehicles on the same services every day, these were Bristol LDs. BD were more flexible with their allocations and provided Bristol LDs, FLFs and Leyland PD2s. I preferred the PD2s, so at Head Office found out on the day from BD if a PD2 was on the 40. I don't recall Bristol Ks or KSWs ever being allocated to the 40 by either BD or CF. Looking at the LT timetables in 1963/64, Green Line 723 /723A, Tilbury Ferry-London (Aldgate) services, had generous layover times of 20-30 minutes on Mondays to Saturdays, whilst the Country 370, Tilbury Ferry-Romford service, had only four-nine minutes depending on the time of day, so really very little time to even have a cup of tea! There could be on average during the working day seven buses per hour serving the station and the ferry. Together with the trains, Tilbury Ferry / Tilbury Riverside Station was a busy place for public transport.



Above: ex Eastern National Bristol MW6G / ECW C39F 458 (7017 HK). Part of the Ensignbus heritage fleet, standing at Tilbury Ferry on 11 June 2022 in virtually the same spot where Eastern National and London Transport services terminated in the heyday of their operations. It is waiting to depart on the Omnibus Society Running Day to celebrate 90 years of the creation of Eastern National, the event being postponed from 2020 because of the pandemic. **Andy Gipson**

Peter Kay's book on the ferries records the early history as follows:

The ferry between Tilbury and Gravesend had existed since 'time immemorial', but we are concerned in this book only with the 'railway' period. A 'ferry' is, in law, a right of monopoly to provide a ferry service between defined points. In this case the position is more complicated than usual, as the 'ferry' from Tilbury to Gravesend was a separate entity from the 'ferry' from Gravesend to Tilbury. The former belonged anciently to the Manor of West Tilbury, but had passed to the Board of Ordnance around 1680. The latter had belonged to the Manor of Parrock (Kent), and passed to Gravesend Corporation in 1694. The actual running of the ferries was 'let' to local watermen using rowing or sailing boats. In principle, if the two 'ferries' were let to different people, each boat would have to run empty in one direction; but by the early 19th century at least, the ferries were normally let to the same operator.

From **Les Hearson**:

With regard to Richard Delahoy's article about the Tilbury to Gravesend ferry, may I offer a small correction? Jetstream Tours did not take over the ferry from White Horse Ferries in 2002. It was a company called The Lower Thames and Medway Passenger Boat Company (John Potter) in late 2001. He used an old Gosport Ferry, renamed as the 'Duchess M', on the service. This was backed up when necessary by another boat that was usually used for river cruises, the 'Princess Pocahontas'.

This company continued to run the ferry reasonably well until in September 2016 the Maritime Coastguard Agency took proceedings against the ferry operator for an engine fault on the Duchess M. The upshot of this being that in 2017 the ferry service contract was terminated (there were apparently a number of issues regarding maintenance, or lack of). Jetstream took over the service on 2 May 2017.

Regarding the council subsidy. This was split 50:50 between Kent CC and Thurrock Council, the latter of which continued to pay their share despite issuing a section 114 notice in December 2022. Throughout 2023, negotiations had been ongoing to reach agreement for a renewed five year contract and seem in the summer to have been moving forward quite positively.

In October 2023, Thurrock unilaterally withdrew from the subsidy contract leaving Kent to pick up the tab for the full amount. Surprisingly, after the issue was raised in Parliament, Thurrock then found enough money, from another budget, to offer to recommence paying their half of the subsidy. This would have been for the period April 2024 to March 2025. However, Jetstream who had already accepted two previous short term contracts, seemingly weren't willing to accept another and therefore walked away.

EBM Extra 6

From **Roger Tuke**:

One small correction to EBM Extra 6. In the Colours of Network Colchester article on page 25 it states that in Arriva days three short Dart SLF with Caetano Nimbus bodies were operated for some years. This should read four. They were:

1562 RX07 KPG
1563 RX07 KPJ
1564 HX04 HUH
1565 HX04 HUK

All four were new to TGM sister company Link Line Coaches of Harlesden primarily for use on BBC Staff Shuttle W1-W12, (Portland Place W1 to White City W12). They were used in a plain white livery, although I have pictures of one of them carrying 'Children in Need' colourful graphics on the white livery for the annual BBC appeal. They then went to Network Harlow (KPJ was loaned briefly to Network Colchester in 2012) then on to Classic of Annfield Plain. HUH & KPJ were received in the TGM Classic livery and HUK & KPG were received in the Nexus livery. KPG went on loan to New Enterprise Coaches of Tonbridge in 2014 before entering service with NC.

From **Nigel Turner**:

Re the cover picture of Hedingham Bristol VR / ECW L104, this was actually its second livery - the repaint by Eastern National when they sold the VR to Hedingham was into overall cream, with red skirt, central band and roof / upper deck window surrounds. The livery seen on the cover was applied in Spring 1984.

Michael Dryhurst advises that all his Southend Corporation pictures were taken in March 1958.

Various recent EBMs

Paul McCartney's 1972 Wings Tour Bus, ex Eastern National Bristol KSW / ECW open top 2385 (WNO 481), has now been sold by auction (at the end of April 2024). 208 bids were made, the winning one was for £186,000. The new owner(s) are not known, but it has been reported that it is to be exported to Germany. It made its last public appearance with its previous owner, and perhaps for the last time in the UK*, at the Classic Car Boot Sale, King's Cross, London on 27 and 28 April.

* After languishing in a ravine in Tenerife for many years in a derelict state before returning to the UK and being rebuilt and refurbished, if it is exported, never say never that it may one day make another appearance in the UK!

With thanks to **John Lidstone**, **Chris Stewart** and **Nick Street**.

721 for EBM 721

A selection of photos of Green Line route 721 (Aldgate to Brentwood) taken in the 1970s.

Right: The last ever 721 to leave Brentwood, only going to Romford, LNC36 (NPD 136L) packed to the front with standing passengers at 2355 on 1 July 1977. **Chris Stewart**



Right: Bus seated Leyland Nationals had replaced RP types on the route in 1973, which in turn had only replaced RCLs the year before. The RPs were originally in dual green livery. Here is RP12 (JPA 112K) at a later date, after repaint into NBC dual purpose livery, standing in for a Leyland National. **Photobus**



Below: LNC34 (NPD 134L) on diversion in Hart Street, Brentwood. **Photobus**



15 April 2024

22/A (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Waltham Abbey, Shernbrooke Road **Vectare**. Further to EBM 720, change deferred to 2 June (see below).

66A (Su only) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Loughton Station **Central Connect**. Further to EBM 720, change deferred to 2 June (see below).

301 (M-S) Saffron Walden, Mortimers Gate - Bishop's Stortford Interchange. Service withdrawn by **Central Connect** and replaced on a temporary reduced emergency timetable (every 2-3 hours rather than hourly, first journey from Bishop's Stortford 0728, last journey 1628; first journey from Saffron Walden 0824, last journey 1726) by **A2B Travel**, with **Stephensons** operating one journey at 1528 from Bishop's Stortford.

316/318 (M-S) Saffron Walden Tesco - Stansted Airport Bus Station. Service withdrawn by **Central Connect** and replaced on a temporary reduced emergency timetable (every 2-3 hours rather than hourly, first journey from Stansted 0730, last journey 1630; first journey from Saffron Walden 0830, last journey 1730) by **A2B Travel**.

319/320/321 (M-S) Audley End Railway Station - Haverhill Sainsburys. Service withdrawn by **Central Connect** and replaced by **Stephensons** to the same timetable.

18 April

59/590 (M-S) Audley End Railway Station - Saffron Walden, Elizabeth Way. Essex County Council have awarded a temporary contract to **Stephensons** to operate the existing contract. However, **Central Connect** are still operating this service as they haven't cancelled it. As the **Stephensons** journeys are not yet registered, no fares are being charged.

1 May

301 (M-S) Saffron Walden, Mortimers Gate - Bishop's Stortford Interchange. Improved service introduced, jointly operated by **A2B** and **Stephensons**. Hourly headway restored. First journey from Saffron Walden 0726, last journey 1827; first journey from Bishops Stortford 0628, last journey 1928.

316/318 (M-S) Saffron Walden Tesco - Stansted Airport Bus Station. Improved service introduced, jointly operated by **A2B** and **Stephensons**. Hourly headway restored. First journey from Saffron Walden 0530, last journey 1830; first journey from Stansted 0630, last journey 1930.

25 May

1 (S, Su only then Daily) Clacton Pier Avenue - Holland-on-Sea **Heddingham**. OPEN TOP SERVICE from Pier Avenue, serving Martello Tower, Clacton Pier, Holland-on-Sea, Railway Station and back to Pier Avenue. Weekends only until 14 July, then Daily 20 July to 1 September (except 22/23 August due to the Clacton Air Show). Operates every 40 minutes 1000-1840.

2 June

16C (Su Only) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Loughton Station Circular **Central Connect**. Replaces the current 66A on Sundays. In Upshire will operate an anti-clockwise loop towards Loughton and a clockwise loop towards Waltham Cross.

18/C (Daily) North Weald, The Talbot - Epping Station **Central Connect**. Revised route and timetable. Service 18 extended from Epping, St Margaret's Hospital to Epping Station on M-S. Some journeys extended to & from Loughton. Service 418B withdrawn and replaced by a revised timetable on service 18.

20/21/22/22B (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Ongar Two Brewers **Central Connect**. Replaces the existing 420/420A. Most journeys on 20 will operate between Harlow Bus Station and Ongar Two Brewers. Service 21 will operate between Harlow Bus Station and Epping Station via Tumbler Road in Harlow. Service 22/B will operate between Harlow Bus Station and Epping Station, via North Weald.

21/A/S (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Canvey Newlands **First Essex**. Most M-S journeys extended beyond the Travel Centre to & from Great Wakering, Landwick Cottages.

22/A (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Waltham Abbey, Shernbrooke Road **Vectare**. Service renumbered 16/A with a revised timetable.

28 (M-S) Harlow Bus Station Circular via River Way (M-S) **Vectare**. NEW SERVICE, operates via Edinburgh Way and River Way.

71/371/372/X71 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - Chelmsford Bus Station **First Essex**. Off peak X71 journeys will operate as 71, with most short 71 journeys being extended to & from Colchester. In Stanway, 71/372 will operate via Sainsburys and 371/X71 via Tollgate Retail Park.

86 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - West Mersea High Street **First Essex**. Rerouted via Lethe Grove as replacement for part of service S8 with a revised timetable.

87 (Daily) Great Horkeley, Malvern Way - Brightlingsea, Victoria Place **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-F with off peak frequency increased.

351 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Warley, Eagle Way **First Essex**. Minor timetable change.

724 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Heathrow Central Bus Station **Arriva**. Revised timetable with an additional stop introduced at Shepherds Lane, Watford.

B5 (M-F) Basildon Bus Station - Basildon, Gardiners Lane South **First Essex**. NEW SERVICE, replaces the short journeys between these points, currently operated as X10.

S1 (Daily) Colchester Highwoods - Wivenhoe Railway Station **First Essex**. Additional journeys introduced on M-F and a revised timetable introduced on Sundays.

S4 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - Greenstead Library **First Essex**. Earlier journey introduced on M-F, with a revised timetable on M-S.

S6 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - Shrub End, Hazell Avenue **First Essex**. Minor timetable change.

S7 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - St Michaels, Baronswood Way **First Essex**. Minor timetable change.

S8 (Daily) Colchester Railway Station - Monkwick, Gosfield Road **First Essex**. M-F peak hour journeys that extend to & from Colchester Railway Station are extended to Colchester Hospital. Section of route via Lethe Grove withdrawn and replaced by a rerouting of service 86.

S10 (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Colchester Hospital **First Essex**. NEW SERVICE, operates hourly via Ipswich Road and St Johns.

X10 (Daily) Basildon Bus Station - Stansted Airport Bus Station **First Essex**. Revised route and timetable daily, with short journeys between Basildon Bus Station and Basildon, Gardiners Lane South replaced by new service B5.

X30 (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Stansted Airport Bus Station **First Essex**. Increased from every 60 to every 30 minutes on M-S between Southend Travel Centre and Chelmsford Bus Station, with alternate journeys operating via either Southend Hospital or Southend Airport. These will replace the existing short journeys between Rayleigh Town Centre and Rayleigh, Wolsey Park / Chelmsford Bus Station. Additional journeys between Chelmsford Bus Station and Stansted Airport, some of which will omit the route via Broomfield Hospital and Great Dunmow.

Below: A2B Travel Enviro 200 YX11 AEA is waiting for time at Thaxted (with the historic Guildhall in the background)on 15 April 2024 on the first day of their operation of route 316 between Saffron Walden and Stansted Airport following Central Connect's withdrawal from this ECC contract. **Owen Woodliffe**



Below: Also on 15 April, A2B Travel and Stephensons on their first day of replacing Central Connect on route 301 (Saffron Walden - Bishop's Stortford). **Top:** A2B provided one bus which enabled a two hourly service (but three hour mid-morning on one for driver break). Mini Enviro 200 MMC SK68 LZP at Saffron Walden on the 1336 departure from the High Street to Bishop's Stortford. **Bottom:** An afternoon journey on 301 was scheduled to be worked by Stephensons. Solo 325 (YJ58 PHO) is departing at 1528 from Bishop's Stortford Interchange. From 1 May an improved service was introduced, jointly operated by A2B and Stephensons, with the previous hourly headway restored. Both **Owen Woodliffe**



The changes to the 301, 316 & 318-321 routes from 15 April (and amended on 1 May) are as a result of Central Connect (part of Vectare) giving notice to terminate their Essex County Council contracts (which commenced on 1 August 2022) for these routes early, they were to have run until this summer. Public notification of the cancellation of the routes by Central Connect was only made a few days before the applicable date, waiting for acceptance of the

cancellations being confirmed by the Office of the Traffic Commissioner (OTC), leading to ECC making emergency temporary arrangements with A2B Travel and Stephensons. However, a press statement issued by Vectare stated that they had tried to discuss the operation of these services with ECC as long ago as last September, without success, leading them to submit formal contract cancellation notices on 12 February, having submitted the registrations to ECC on 4 February. It would appear that ECC took no action to arrange replacement services until the registration cancellations were accepted by the OTC in the second week of April. Whilst it is highly unusual for a contractor to surrender / terminate a tendered service early, we understand that the standard ECC contract does include clauses dealing with this possibility, subject to certain contractual penalties. No fares were charged on the replacement services until the new registrations were accepted by the OTC.

Essex County Council produces and prints multi-operator stop specific timetables for over 3,000 bus stops in Essex. Over the last two years, these artworks have been posted countywide by First Essex Buses Ltd. This arrangement has been extended for a further two years, until Summer 2026. Bus stops are updated (if required) approximately every six weeks in line with bus route / timetable changes. The next set of agreed change dates are 28 July, 1 September and 27 October 2024.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy and Paul Harvey.

Below: May Day Bank Holiday First Essex services, one exception, a Saturday service ran on route X30.



Adam Kelleher

Acquired Vehicles

33725 SN12 AKX SFD4DSBRCGX36793 B452/10 H45/30F 06/12 First Games Transport

Acquired from First Midlands and South Yorkshire. Collected from Olive Grove depot, Sheffield on 17 April 2024 and driven to Westway depot, Chelmsford. It entered service from Hadleigh on 18 April but moved to Basildon on 26th. In Urban livery. No main fleet names but small 'First' above drivers cab on offside and small 'First South Yorkshire' above doors on nearside.

This is another vehicle which was part of the batch of 100 Enviro 400s purchased by First Bus as shuttles for the 2012 Olympic Games. After the Games it moved to First Manchester. It was temporarily loaned to Diamond Bus North West in 2019 after their purchase of First's Bolton depot. When it returned to First it moved to Sheffield.

47625 SN14 DZH SA9DSRXXX14141513 AJ981 B37F 05/14 First Glasgow (No. 1)

Wrightbus StreetLite DF. Acquired from First Glasgow, collected from Overtown depot and driven to Westway depot, Chelmsford on Sunday 14 April 2024. In Urban 2 livery with white front and a light purple band (the same colour as the dividing line on the sides) under the front windscreen. It had no branding at all, but very small 'Essex' fleet names have been added below the nearside and offside front windows. This is the first First Essex StreetLite in this livery. It entered service from Chelmsford on 18 April.

Photos of both these buses are on page 19.

Vehicles on Loan

Further to last month, Driver Trainers 66846, 66860 and 66863 have all returned from Norwich. 66846 was at Quayside depot, Colchester on 18 April, 66860 was seen on driver training at Lexden Road, Lexden Village, Colchester on 22nd and 66863 was seen on driver training at Braintree Bus Interchange (19th) and in Witham town centre (25th). Julian Elliott confirmed at his presentation to the Group on 13 April that First Essex driver training vehicles are borrowed by Norwich as and when required.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 1 2024/25 (31 March - 27 April)

32532 CR-CR (oos), 32641 CF (oos)-Disposal, 32669 CR-CR (oos), 33689 CR-CR (oos), 33725 FG-HH-BN, 37015 CR-CR (oos), 37035 CR-CR (oos), 44004 BN (oos)-Disposal, 44006 CR-CF, 44080 BN (oos)-BN, 44908 BN (oos)-Disposal, 47625 FG-CF, 47650 CR-BN, 47665 CR (oos)-CR, 63312 BN-CR, 66817 CR (oos)-Disposal, 67160 CF-Disposal, 67166 BN-Disposal, 67191 BN-BN (oos), 67193 CR-BN, 67194 CR-BN, 69430 CF-CF (oos)

69430 is reported to be for scrap following an RTC on 10 April.

Disposals

32641 to PVS for scrap, 27 April 2024.

44004 to PVS for scrap, 9 April 2024.

67160 & 67166 to First West of England, Bath depot, 13 April 2024. Note, 67160 still had its luggage racks. 44908 & 66817 April 2024.

32551 to PVS for scrap, 3 May 2024.

66817 was the last of the first generation Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Urban Eclipses in the fleet apart from driver trainers.

Repaint

After a recent pause in repaints, Enviro 400 MMC 33987 left Basildon to go for repainting on 25 April.

Services

Of note in the First Essex service changes from 2 June, reported in 'Service Revisions' above, is that route numbers B5 and S10 are being reused. This is the first time that this has happened since the shuttle routes were introduced two years ago. In both cases, the routes are different from the original ones with those numbers.

Around the Depots

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

Colchester

47658 has received a super rear advert, mainly pink, for Creffield Lodge Dentists. Conversely, 37140 has lost its super rear advert for Adult Community Learning Essex.

Further to last month, 37005, 37010 and 37053 hadn't gone and were still on the scrap line on 10 April. 32530, 32642 and 37020 were still there and had been joined by 32676. All have Ticketer and various parts removed, fleet names, numbers and various other exterior forms of ID overpainted in black. Also additions to the line but still complete and with Ticketers still fitted were 32532 and 37042 plus 33689 which has been out of service since 19 March. 66817 had gone, see 'Disposals' above. By 18th, 37035 was on the line (its last day of service was 15th). By 27th 32669 (last day in service 25th) and 37015 (last day 22nd) had joined the line.

Below: The scrap line on 29 April 2024. From left to right, 37015 (WX55 VJC), 63337 (SM65 EEV), 37035 (YJ06 XLA), 33689 (SN12 AFZ) and blue 32669 (SN55 HDZ). Beyond this, most buses have had their fleet names and numbers, and part of the registration, overpainted black. Engineless 63341 (SM65 EEZ) is second from the right. **David Edwards**

N.B. The StreetLites and Enviro 400s are parked in the line, but are not for scrap.



News of the Harwich routes (5 April - 2 May).

Most journeys are still operated by Wrightbus StreetLites, and Volvo B7RLEs 69515 - 69520. In fact, during this period, every StreetLite on the Colchester allocation except 47650 (now transferred to Basildon), 63337 and those out of service worked on 102/104.

During the school holidays up to 12 April, the only double deck working on 104 was 0915 Mistley - Colchester. When the new school term began on 15th, the double deck working reverted to 0830 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1008 return. All these journeys are Mon - Fri only. A rare Saturday appearance of a double-decker occurred on 20th when 37140 worked 1035 & 1335 Colchester - Harwich 104 returning at 1208 and 1508.

1725 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1900 Harwich - Colchester 102 produced a few double-deckers: 37139 on 8th, 33713 on 16th, 33663 on 22nd, 33680 on 23rd plus Airlink liveried Enviro 200 MMC 67190 on 24th. Another Enviro 200 MMC in Airlink livery to reach Harwich was 67189. It worked 0610 Harwich - Colchester 104 on 10th, then a full day on 174/175, before moving on to X20 in the evening. On 17th, 67189 worked 0720 Harwich - Colchester 104, then moved onto X20.

Clacton routes.

More variety on route 74B this period with the reduction in the Volvo B7TL / Gemini fleet. Not all days have been recorded, but reported have been: 32547 (27th), 33686 (10th, 13th), 37004 (9th), 37037 (16th), 37133 (4 May), 47421 (19th), 47666 (29th), 47669 (24th), 63328 (15th, 3 May), 63329 (30th-2 May), 63331 (17th), 69520 (23rd).

Route 76: 47679 (14th), 63330 (21st), 47666 (28th), 37062 (5 May).

Airlink liveried Enviro 200 MMCs 67193 and 67194 transferred to Basildon during April (leaving only 67189/90/92 at Colchester) so there are now more double-deckers on route X20 and a greater number of vehicles have been used, mainly acquired Enviro 400s. 37621 has not been reported this period. Noted have been 33663 (9th-10th, 14th, 16th-17th, 19th, 23rd, 28th, 30th, 2-3, 5 May), 33669 (14th, 18th, 20th, 22nd-23rd, 25th-27th, 3 May), 33680 (12th, 21st, 24th, 29th, 5 May), 33682 (25th), 33687 (15th, 28th-1 May), 33690 (8th, 10th-14th, 16th, 20th-21st, 25th, 27th-28th, 1-5 May), 33692 (27th-28th, 30th-1 May, 4 May), 33713 (11th-12th, 17th, 20th, 22nd-24th, 26th-28th, 30th), 33825 (22nd), 37140 (8th-15th, 18th, 21st), 37613 (8th-10th, 13th-17th, 19th, 21st, 28th-29th, 4-5 May). On Sunday 14th, X20 was all double deck operated. As double deck operation is now so common, in future we will not report on these in as much detail.

Also on the route was B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 69519 (9th, 16th, 18th).

Single-deckers on route 320: 47697 (3 May), 69516 (26th), 69518 (22nd), 69520 (9th).

Chelmsford

Further to last month, 32551 and 32641 were still on the scrap line on 9 April, joined by 47601 and 67162, both with relatively minor front end accident damage. 67805 had gone. 47601 returned to service on 23rd. By early May, both Volvo B7TLs had gone, see 'Disposals' above.

Enviro 400 MMCs on X30: 33994 (27th), 33995 (8th, 24th-25th, 3 May), 33996 (18th, 24th-26th), 33997 (17th, 30th, 2 May), 33998 (15th, 23rd, 27th, 2-3 May). Plus, unusually, one Enviro 400, 33657 (30th). 69421 on 3 (2 May). DS69148 at Boreham Interchange going on to A12 (15th).

Basildon

44004 (heavily cannibalised) and 44908 were on the scrap line on 7 April, but both had gone by the end of the month (see 'Disposals' above).

47596 was on loan to Ensignbus from 7th April for emergency rail replacement work (see also 'Hadleigh' below), it returned to service at Basildon on 16th.

Double-deckers on X10 shorts: 33411 (10th, 11th), 33418 (30th), 33425 (10th), 33504 (9th), 33507 (19th), 33545 (12th, 25th), 33546 (8th), 33551 (29th), 33562 (30th), 33563 (10th, 29th), 33568 (25th). 47652 (1 May), 63165 (22nd), 63383 (29th) and 67196 (25th) on 625. 44001 on 9 (2 May). 63169 a long StreetLite on 9 (12th).

Hadleigh

Further to last month, CF67160 and BN67166 last operated at Hadleigh on 6 April (so only from 2nd to 6th) and the next day both were at Ensignbus, Purfleet for use on emergency rail replacement work, before moving to First West of England on 13th (see 'Disposals' above).

Also further to last month, 47648 returned to Basildon from loan at Hadleigh on 11 April.

33725 (18th, its first journeys with First Essex) and 34451 (23rd), double-deckers on 14 shorts. 44927 on 28 (18th, all day).

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

First Essex News in Pictures

Recently acquired Enviro 400s are becoming regular on route X30. 33688 (SN12 AFY) is seen in North Station Road, Colchester on 25 March 2024.

Daniel Pretty



Two Buses Acquired in April

Enviro 400 33725 (SN12 AKX) entered service from Hadleigh on 18 April 2024 but moved to Basildon eight days later. Here it is whilst at HH, on route 21 at Belton Way, Leigh on 24 April, still with 'First South Yorkshire' small fleet names above the doors.

John G Lidstone



StreetLite 47625 (SN14 DZH), the only First Essex StreetLite in Urban 2 with white front livery, in Duke Street, Chelmsford, opposite the bus station, ready to take up service on route C7 on 22 April 2024. Note the unusual application of the fleet number (on the band below the windscreen) and the small 'Essex' fleet name under the first passenger window.

Dale Bell



Acquired Vehicle

For the Heritage Fleet

BUF 426C, Leyland Titan PD3 / NCME ('Queen Mary') CO38/31F, new to Southdown.

Acquired from Panther Travel, Harwich, April 2024. In Southdown livery. It attended the Spring Gathering at the London Bus Museum in Brooklands on 14 April and was used on the 462 shuttle service to Weybridge Station, as seen **below**, next to Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 130 (36319, LX15 GPY) in similar looking X80 heritage livery. **Andrew Colebourne**



Awayadays Routemaster Hire

Following the death of Awayadays owner David McMaster in 2023, the Awayadays company is no longer in a position to run its tours and private hire. However, they have now secured the services of Ensignbus to operate bookings on their behalf using the original Awayadays bus fleet supported by their own buses where needed, effective from April 2024.

Vehicle on Loan

The Newman Family's open top Enviro 500, former 368 (68 EB) has again been used on some route 68 journeys this year. See photo on inside rear cover.

Other Vehicle News

Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 128 (36317, LX15 GOP) is currently SORN, it was last used in service on 8 March 2023.

Blind displays have been changed to First Essex style, with route numbers on the offside and letters within route numbers at half size.



Above: A photo taken from the top deck of last month's cover co-star, RT113, on its way back from the South East Bus Festival at the Kent Showground, Detling on 6 April 2024. Wrightbus StreetDeck 176 (35701, LX71 AOL) on a c2c rail replacement heading towards Upminster on the B186 Warley Street. **Alan Moore**

Services

From Saturday 4 May open top buses returned to the Southend Pier to Shoeburyness East Beach route after many years absence, complementing the existing 68 from Leigh to Southend Pier. More details on page 1, plus there are photos throughout this issue.



Disposal

Open top Dennis Trident / Alexander ALX 400 339 (32721, TSU 639) to an advertising company in April 2024. It is currently in all white livery for Virgin Voyages, with a ship design covering the upper deck.

Below: From Richard Branson's X feed on 19 April 2024.



Richard Branson ✓
@richardbranson

Follow

Brilliant to be in London for the launch of my audiobook, and the start of @VirginVoyages' Mediterranean sailing season! The @Virgin brand was built on a houseboat, and who would have thought we would be cruising around on a double decker boat all these years later: [virgin.in/444pMsy](https://www.virginvoyages.com/444pMsy)



12:50 · 19/04/2024 From Earth · 63K Views

Opposite: Last month we reported on the acquisition of HCD 347E, a Leyland PD3/4 / Northern Counties, 'Queen Mary' full front body with panoramic windows, new to Southdown in March 1967. This bus has an earlier Essex connection as for a time it was with Coles School of Motoring of Southend & Brentwood and Bender School of Motoring of Laindon.

In the **top** photo, taken in March 1987, it is with Bender, parked in Denbigh Road, Laindon, close to their yard, still in as acquired Coles livery.

In the **bottom** photo, taken a year later in March 1988, it is at the Laindon base with FHG 162E, an East Lancs bodied Leyland PD2A/27. This was new to Burnley, Colne & Nelson in 1967 and was transferred to Burnley & Pendle in 1974. It was then sold in 1981 to P & O Lloyd of Bagillt, Clwyd. Bender bought it in 1986 and it retained Lloyd's livery which Bender adopted in modified form for other buses including HCD 347E. Both **Nick Street**



Acquired Vehicles

	YN07 UOG	Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka	H47/28F	Ex Brighton & Hove 674
826	YN57 FYA	Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka	H47/28F	Ex Brighton & Hove 677
	YN57 FYB	Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka	H47/28F	Ex Brighton & Hove 679
830	YN57 FYE	Scania N270UD / East Lancs OmniDekka	H47/28F	Ex Brighton & Hove 683

826 and 830 arrived at Clacton by 13 April 2024 and 826 entered service on 16th on Manningtree Schools service M1. YN07 UOG & YN57 FYB moved to Sudbury on 25th.

Further to last month, the full list of fleet numbers for the ex-Go North West Enviro 200s is 248 (LX13 CZA), 249 (LX13 CZC), 250 (LX13 CZF), 251 (YX13 EFY) and 252 (YX13 EFZ). However, it appears that although 248 was thought to be joining Hedingham, it has been repainted into Konectbus colours.

Significant Allocations

249	Go NW - CN	by 26 March
250	Go NW - CN	by 27 March
251	Go NW - CN	by 15 April
252	Go NW - CN	by 15 April
259	CN - SY	by 26 April
816	SY - KN	by 26 April (had been constant with Chambers since November 2023)
826	B&H - CN	by 16 April (on 74/63 routes by 17 April)
830	B&H - CN	by 23 April

Fleet News

251 (YX13 EFY) and 252 (YX13 EFZ) entered service on 15 April in Go North West MCR (Manchester) livery, meaning four out of the five arrivals had entered service, with 248 eventually being allocated to Konectbus.

Reportedly more ex-Brighton & Hove Scania OmniDekkas are due to arrive but the final number is yet to be confirmed. Brighton & Hove had 10 of these type remaining in their fleet at the start of April. 826 / 830 are short versions similar to the bulk of OmniDekkas operated, where the existing fleet 800-820 have the smaller N94UD engine, whereas 821-3 are N94UDs but with the larger H51/37F bodies.

Relatively recent acquisitions Scania CK230UB / East Lancs OmniLinks 465-7 (YN58 BCE/F/K) are recorded as B43F which is technically true, but a visual check of 465 confirmed it was officially designated a 37 seater with potential for 34 standees. This is attained by the nearside having six flip up seats behind the front nearside wheel side-by-side on the wall, with the immediate area designated for standing with multiple hand loops, akin to the London Underground (see photo **opposite**, 465 at Colchester Bus Station on 27 April 2024. **Mark Lloyd**). 465 has white Hedingham & Chambers fleet names on the front and nearside, 466 on the nearside and offside and also to the front its old Go Ahead logos still.

Long term VOR during April were 258/268/276/457/510/523/573/802/876.

Services

Hedingham introduced new service City 70 from 15 April, from Marks Tey via Stane Retail Park to Colchester Bus Station. The first vehicle to operate the route was Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Gemini 534 (LX59 DCV) with 800 (YN53 RYP) and 823 (YN56 FFC) - see photo page 26 - also working the route on the first day. A regular performer thereafter has been 821 (YN56 FFA).

Hedingham open top 'Breeze' service will return again from 25 May 2024 onwards but will follow a revised route from Clacton Pier to Martello Tower then doubling back to Great Holland and back into town via the rail station. It would appear that the 'Breeze' will once again be part of the Clacton Rocks set of day ticket pricing which will make it more attractive to families than last year.

With thanks to David Arnold, John Podgorski and the Hedingham website.



Below: Recently acquired Enviro 200 251 (YX13 EFY) outside Clacton depot on 3 April 2024. **Alan Moore**







Opposite: Comparison of long and short wheelbase Scania / East Lancs OmniDekkas, both still in Brighton & Hove livery. **Top:** Long wheelbase N94UD 823 (YN56 FFC) on the first day of service 70 to Marks Tey on the morning of 15 April 2024, at Colchester Bus Station. The acquisition of this vehicle was reported in EBM 699 (July 2022).

Dave Arnold

Bottom: Recently acquired (see above) N270UD 830 (YN57 FYE), still carrying its Brighton number 683, in Pier Avenue, Clacton on 19 April 2024, prior to taking up service on a Tendring Technical College school contract.

Robert Appleton

Below: Fellow Go Ahead company, Go Ahead London's Private Hire fleet long wheelbase Enviro 400 MMC E284 (SN66 WNE) blinded for a funeral was an unusual sight at Chelmsford Bus Station on 22 April 2024. **David Moth**



Acquisition

At the end of April, Vectare acquired family owned Simonds of Diss, a retirement acquisition. Simonds have an O Licence for 50 vehicles and operate 12 registered bus services as well as private hire, holidays and excursions. As this company is outside our area we will not be reporting on it in detail in EBM.

Acquired Vehicle

344, JW16 BUS, ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMC, B41F, new to Whitelaws, Stonehouse, Lanarkshire, August 2016. Later to Redline Buses then Red Rose. In Whitelaws silver and black livery but with fleet name and red / blue / white relief removed and with front bumpers painted red. Acquired March 2024. First used in service on 2 April. This completes the fleet number sequence 305-356, all Enviro 200 MMCs of varying lengths, however there are now gaps in this series, see below.

Disposals

All red Enviro 200 912, ex 1406 (LJ58 AVE), which has been out of service for a few months, was sold in April 2024.

Enviro 200 MMCs 331-340 (YX22 OKA/B/C/D/E, YX72 ONA/B/C/D/F), all in Central Connect red and blue livery, are reported as being withdrawn and are being repainted into all white at Mardens before being returned to the lessors, although 332 was still in service on 11 April. The PVR has dropped by six with the withdrawal of the Saffron Walden routes mentioned in 'Service Changes' above, plus two with the loss of route 833 in Nottinghamshire, and, as reported in recent EBMs, other Enviro 200 MMCs have been bought new and acquired. 334 and 336 have been seen at Mardens and 340 in operation for Gateshead Central Taxis (in all white). 336 may also now be with Gateshead Central Taxis.

With thanks to Dave Arnold, Ian Ransom, Bus Lists on the Web and LOTS.

Below: Enviro 200 MMC 345 (WH66 BUS) on route 316, alongside the huge tower of Thaxted Church, on 10 April 2024, ironically the day it became public knowledge that Central Connect were to withdraw from this ECC route.

Owen Woodliffe



Acquired Vehicles

Further to previous EBM's, the former Nottingham City Transport Enviro 200s were finally collected in April, after the introduction of the electric buses there. Fleet numbers are not yet known. YX63 KFJ entered service on 1 May and YX63 GXW on 3rd, both from Haverhill depot and both in acquired livery, the former blue, the latter red.

Services

See Service Revisions above for news on Stephenson's operations of ECC Saffron Walden area routes.



Richard Delahoy

Harlow

Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 2 3882, reported as being out of service in EBM 719, has been repainted from old to new livery and was back in use in March.

There continue to be service cuts on Monday-Fridays due to vehicle shortages. 4184 has been out of service since 30 November 2023, 1467 since 27 February 2024 and 4239 since 15 March.

Work finally started on the Bus Station at the beginning of April. Several bays now inaccessible. It is intended that operations continue and work round the demolition work.

Below: Driver shuttle Mercedes-Benz Sprinters 1000 (BT66 UAL) and 1014 (BG67 WGM) at Southend Travel Centre on 20 March 2024. **Tony Gaze**



Southend

Enviro 400 MMC 6502 (SN66 WHV) has been on loan to Ware, from 25 April, so far used on routes 66 (Waltham Cross-Loughton) and 310 (Waltham Cross-Hertford).

With thanks to John Card, Adam Kelleher and Allan White.



Ian Ransom

Disposals

As reported above, Leyland Titan PD3 / NCME ('Queen Mary') BUF 426C to Ensignbus in mid-April.

Volvo B12B / Plaxton AB53 PAN reverted to LK53 KXB before being sold for scrap to MC Tractors, Ramsey.

Other Vehicle News

Alexander Dennis Dart VB08 PAN (ex CU08 ADZ) has gone on loan to Purple Parking, Gatwick Airport.

Former Central Connect Alexander Dennis Dart / East Lancs Esteem LX09 AZL, has had bodywork repairs, been fitted with Hanover blinds throughout and has had the skirt repainted blue. It will be used as a temporary spare bus, but will not be used on ECC contract work. **Below:** Almost ready for the road, 26 April 2024. **Adam Barham**

With thanks to Adam Barham.



1st Direct Coaches, South Woodham Ferrers

OU56 RHE, a Neoplan N2216 (C61FT), was acquired ex Bennett, West Drayton, Greater London in November 2023.

Barker, Roydon

SV54 ELW, a Neoplan N122/3L (CH69FT), was withdrawn from service by March of this year and is understood to be with a private owner in Rendlesham, Suffolk.

Lodge, High Easter

East Lancs H47/30F bodied Transbus Trident PN04 XDL left here in March and is now with R&J Coaches, Smeeth, Kent.

Merriday (Fourways Coaches), Highwood

YN06 JYJ, a Scania N94UD4 with East Lancs H85F body, is here from Sihota, Southall, Greater London.

Milestone, Canvey Island

Ex National Express Scania K410EB6 with Caetano C57FLT body BN64 FKL is now here and has been named 'Alice Victoria'.

Terry's Cars, Witham

Has ceased PCV operation, but continues running private hire vehicles and taxis.

The two PCVs were Ford Transit M16 GU62 EZC and Vauxhall Vivaro TE15 BUS, both now sold.

Travel for Success, Crays Hill

BX14 KOH, a King Long C34F acquired in June 2022, was re-registered as MR63 TFS and has now gone to Transport for School, Belvedere, Greater London.

REL Davian, Rayleigh

Coach industry investor REL Capital has added three more operators to its portfolio, Lewis Coaches of London, Advance Minibuses of Rayleigh and KB Coaches of Wickford. All three are retirement sales.

Lewis Coaches is said to be the capital's oldest-established coach business, dating to 1919. REL says that it will retain the Lewis Coaches brand but bring the business under its existing Redwing umbrella.

Advance Minibuses will come under the REL Davian fold, but like Lewis Coaches will retain its present identity.

Advance has been purchased from outgoing directors Brian and Shirley Southgate. KB Coaches of Wickford will also be brought into Davian control but will be rebranded under that name.

REL Davian Director Matt Watson says that the business recently increased its O-Licence vehicle authorisation to facilitate growth in Essex and has purchased 15 vehicles to further build its presence in the county.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy, John Podgorski, the PSV Circle and Route One.

Right: Arrow Taxis Mercedes-Benz Sprinter AY17 UVL on route D4 at Manor Road, Dengie village on 26 April 2024. **Chris Stewart**



From the Colour Archives

We have nearly exhausted the Frank Church colour photos in the Group's collection from the 1950s and 1960s (a few are being held over for future EBM Extras) and so we are throwing this feature open to the general membership. Have you got colour photos from the 1960s or 1970s (or even earlier!) that we can use in EBM? We regret we cannot accept physical copies, but please E Mail scans to the editor, address on page 2. Don't worry if your scans are too dark or too light, or have blemishes, as we may be able to edit and enhance them (although it isn't guaranteed that we can make all scans good enough quality for publication). The rarer the view the better, but we will also include more everyday photos. Any operator with a connection to Essex and / or a photo taken in Essex will be considered. Please provide as detailed a caption as possible.

To start with, here is a photo taken by the late **Eric Thompson**. Eastern National's Bristol LS / ECW buses had been renumbered 1200-1247 in August 1964. (There was later a 1248 acquired from United Automobile Services in November 1969 to replace accident damaged 1234.) 1200-1220 were sold between mid-1965 and early 1966, so by the time this photo was taken at Maldon Bus Station on 14 July 1973, Maldon allocated 1221 (567 CTW), new in 1955, was numerically the oldest LS (and oldest vehicle) in the fleet (1953 vintage 1248 had been sold in March 1973). 1221 had been converted for One Man Operation in January 1971. In the photo it retains Tilling green livery, but has had NBC white fleet names added, the cream centre band has been repainted white and the wheels grey. A darker green patch is just visible on the front where the old yellow fleet name has been overpainted. (No Eastern National LSs received NBC green.) 1221 was delicensed for disposal in May 1974.



Inside Rear Cover. Top: View of 365 on its way to Shoeburyness taken from the Pier bridge. **Richard Delahoy**

Bottom: Existing route 68 meets new route 99. As reported on page 20, former 368 (68 EB), an Enviro 500, has again been on loan from the Newman family this year and it is seen passing 365 (not actually in service as this location is not part of its route) at Westcliff, Western Esplanade, The Leas. **John G Lidstone**

Rear Cover: Rear view of 365 at the Shoeburyness East Beach terminus of the 99. **Richard Delahoy**

All photos taken 4 May 2024.

More Southand Open Top Photos





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