

ESSEX BUS NEWS

Issue 546
October 2009



ESSEX BUS ENTHUSIASTS GROUP
www.essexbus.org.uk

New at Hedingham

The two new ADL Enviro 200 Darts L380 and L381 (EU59 AFF and AFJ) pose at Hedingham.

D R MacGregor



L380 pauses in autumn sunshine at Manningtree station on the 2 to Clacton.

Russell Young



L375 (P605 CAY) one of the batch of former Arriva Volvo Olympians that have updated the decker fleet. Here seen just out of the paintshop at Hedingham.

D R MacGregor



Essex Bus News

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Your reports and observations

Members reports, quality photos (prints, slides or JPGs) and original articles are always welcome. Please send them direct to the relevant Sub-Editor.

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

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

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

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Front cover: With the mosaic tile design much as it was 40 years ago and 2510 in the background, Gordon Claydon of CPTM takes newly-restored Eastern National Bristol FLF coach 2614 round the block for photographers during a stop at Basildon Bus Station. Full story on pages xx - xx . (Chris Stewart)

Rear cover: New names in Essex

? (or Essex County Buses if you prefer) ex-Stansted Transit Dart T74 WWV loads in Chelmsford on the (City) 42.

Centrebus newly-acquired Dart R484 LGH in Harlow on the C3. (both Kevin Smith)

Dates for your diary

■ PRESS DATES

For inclusion in EBN dated

November

December

reports should reach Editors by

31 October

28 November

planned despatch date

19 November

12 December

Please note that the planned despatch date may change for all sorts of reasons. The actual despatch day is posted to the website as soon as it is known. Please allow reasonable time for postal delays (at least seven working days) before claiming non-receipt. Replacements can only be obtained from the Membership Secretary (see Group Directory).

■ SOUTH ESSEX MEETINGS

Venue: Wickford Cricket Club, off Swan Lane, Wickford - five minutes walk from

Wickford Station and 5 minutes drive from the A130 and A127. In Wickford town centre, turn into Swan Lane from Runwell Road (Swans pub is on the corner); then turn right into the entrance about 100' up on the right - marked Wickford Tennis Club. This is an unmade road, so beware of potholes. Go straight ahead towards the tennis courts and then left at the end - the cricket clubhouse is in front of you. Car parking available on site.

Doors open at 1930 for an informal chat, with the main talk or show from 2000 to 2145/2200; a cash bar is available. Members and guests welcome. £1 donation please towards the hire of the room. *Richard Delahoy*

Autumn / Winter 2009 programme

- ▶ **Monday Nov 9** - "Essex buses from the 1960s, 70s and 80's, part 2 - F onwards", slide show by *Martin Weyell*
- ▶ **Monday Dec 14** - Christmas Social and "20 years ago" slide show by *Richard Delahoy*

■ NORTH ESSEX MEETINGS

Venue: downstairs room at the **Friends Meeting House, Church Street, Colchester**, just south of "Jumbo" (the water tower) and behind the Mercury Theatre. Town centre bus stops and parking are nearby. Doors open at 1930 for an informal chat, with the main talk or show from 2000 to 2200. £1.50 donation towards room hire, please. Slides/digital photos are preferred, but prints can also be shown. Members and guests welcome. *Dave Arnold*

Autumn / Winter 2009 programme

- ▶ **Friday Nov 13** - *Owen Woodliffe: "Independents in the Home Counties"*.
- ▶ **Friday Dec 11** - *Paul Ashman: "Malta 2009"*.

2010 programme

- ▶ **Fridays** January 8, February 12, March 12, April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13, September 10, October 8, November 12, December 10.

■ EVENTS

- ▶ **Sunday Oct 25: Running Day and Museum Display**, London Bus Preservation Trust, Cobham Bus Museum.
- ▶ **Saturday/Sunday Oct.30-31: London Transport Museum, Guided Tours at Acton Depot.**
- ▶ **Saturday Nov. 21: LOTS Autumn Transport Spectacular**, Harrow Leisure Centre, Christchurch Avenue, Wealdstone, near Harrow & Wealdstone Station: 10am to 4pm.
- ▶ **Saturday/Sunday Nov. 27-28: London Transport Museum, Guided Tours at Acton Depot.**
- ▶ **Saturday Dec 5: "Christmas Cracker", Fayre** with bus and fire engine rides, Ipswich Transport Museum.
- ▶ **Saturday Dec 5: Ensignbus Heritage Bus Running Day** - details to follow.
- ▶ **Friday Jan 1, 2010: Third Southend Heritage Running Day** - details to follow.

The Group Sales Stall will be at this event, selling a wide range of photographs, the latest ECC timetable, and Group Publications including "Blackwell's of Earls Colne".

- ▶ *Information is published in good faith. Members are strongly advised to check details with the organisers/website nearer the date. The Group can accept no liability if events are cancelled or altered.*

Membership Renewals : 2010

All subscriptions now run to the end of the calendar year, so we are inviting you to renew your membership for 2010. The enclosed form should be returned to the Membership Secretary, either by post, at our Wickford meetings or via the Group's stand at the LOTS sale on 21st November, with your payment. We are delighted to say that we are able to hold subscriptions at the current level of £20 for a further year, despite increases in postal rates. We hope that members continue to enjoy the mix of current news and historic features in Essex Bus News and of course the expanding use of colour pictures, all representing excellent value for money.

The renewal form also includes a list of current Group publications and enables you to renew your membership and order books with just one cheque.

Richard Delahoy ~ Treasurer

New members

We are delighted to welcome the following new members who have recently joined the Group:

Matthew Cable of Harlow - 997

Steve Carr of Harlow - 998

Richard Delahoy

Group Directory

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

New members may join from any month during the year, but subscriptions will always run to December, from whichever month the member chooses. Those joining from February to December inclusive will pay a pro-rata subscription calculated at **£1.70** per month. E.g., a member joining in March would pay $10 \times £1.70$; i.e. **£17**.

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

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

Replacements for missing or defective EBNs are available from Richard.

TIMETABLE SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

your details and a cheque for £10 to
Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road,
Southend on Sea SS1 3TT.

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

PUBLICATION SALES

Send orders for publications to:
Owen Woodliffe, 196 Sinclair Road,
Chingford, London E4 8PT

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

BLACK & WHITE PHOTO SALES

Lyn Watson
c/o Barrons Chartered Accountants
Monometer House, Rectory Grove,
Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 2HN

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

lynw@barrons-bds.com

Essex Operators Recognised

At the **Operator Excellence Awards** dinner organised by **routeOne** magazine on October 7th in Birmingham, three Essex operators featured prominently.

We are delighted to report that **Ensign Bus** won the prestigious "Bus Operator of the Year (1-30 vehicles)" award, **Peter Newman** collecting the trophy on behalf of the company. **Excel Passenger Logistics** were short-listed for the "Coach Operator Innovation Award" for their **airportbycoach** brand, but lost out to Ellisons Travel for the trophy; likewise, **Bill Hiron** of **Stephensons** was short-listed for the "Bus Manager of the Year" award but was beaten by Simon Dunn of Rotala.

Incidentally, members might like to know that the hitherto trade-only weekly **routeOne** magazine is now available to read on-line for free and with no registration formalities - simply connect to www.route-one.net/e-books/currentIssue/index.html. Printed copies are still only available free to the trade, or by subscription of £79 pa.

Richard Delahoy

Service Changes

Arriva East Herts & Essex

2 Nov 09	4	D	Harlow to Latton Bush Circular revised timetable.
	10	D	Harlow to Church Langley Circular revised timetable.
15 Nov 09	510	D	Harlow to Stansted Airport revised route and timetable.

Centrebuses

1 Sep 09	319	Sch	Great Dunmow to Bishop Stortford new school service.
	351	M-S	Hertford to Bishop Stortford new service.
	354	M-F	Harlow to Buntingford new service
	700	D	Stevenage to Stansted Airport new service.
	C3	M-S	Harlow to Waltham Cross new service.
			<i>The above replace Galleon Travel services which have been cancelled from 1st September 2009.</i>
14 Sep 09	351	M-S	Hertford to Bishop Stortford revised timetable.
	C3	M-S	Harlow to Waltham Cross revised timetable.

Ensign Bus

7 Sep 09	X80	D	Chafford Hundred to Bluewater Sunday service withdrawn.
5 Dec 09	X55	-	Upminster to Lakeside/Grays new service
	X80H	-	Grays to Gravesend new service
			The above two services operate on the first Saturday in December every year.

Excel

25 Oct 09	308	M-S	Stansted Airport to Bishop Park 0730 journey from Bishop Park withdrawn Mondays to Fridays.
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First Essex

11 Sep 09	15/16	M-F	Southend to Basildon/Canvey
	20	D	Southend to Hullbridge
	24	M-S	Southchurch to Rawreth Adsa
	25	D	Southend to Basildon Hospital

The above services revert to existing routes in Rayleigh upon completion of road works.

21 Sep 09	73/A	D	Brentwood to Bishop Hall Estate
	80A/C	Sun	Brentwood Circular
	81/82	M-S	Warley to Hutton Circular
	351	D	Chelmsford to Warley
	551	M-S	Basildon to Brentwood

The above services diverted during the closure of Brentwood High Street for roadworks.

19 Oct 09	42	M-S	Galleywood to Broomfield Hospital revised timetable with increased frequency.
1 Nov 09	X22	D	Colchester to Stansted Airport revised timetable with service extended to Clacton.
15 Nov 09	15/16	M-F	Southend to Basildon/Canvey minor revision to timetable.
	20	D	Southend to Hullbridge Saturday service increased to every 15 minutes.
	21	D	Canvey to Southend on Saturdays and Mon to Fri off peak service reduced to every 30 minutes between Canvey and Hadleigh. Between Hadleigh and Southend to operate every 15 minutes.
	26	D	Southchurch to Canvey service to operate via Leigh Church
	27	D	Temple Sutton to Canvey minor timetable revisions.

Florida Coaches

1 Sep 09	223	Sch	Halstead to Sible Hedingham new schoolday service.
13 Oct 09	44	M-S	Halstead Town Service revised timetable with Saturday service withdrawn. (Updated information)

Stephensons

2 Sep 09	816	Sch	Hullbridge to St Thomas More School new schoolday service.
5 Oct 09	509	Sch	Southend to St Thomas More School afternoon service withdrawn.
	560	Sch	Southend to St Thomas More School minor timetable change to afternoon journey.

TWH Bus & Coach Hire

1 Sep 09	43	Sch	Chigwell Row to Debden High School new schoolday service.
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Walden Travel

3 Sep 09	94	Sch	Sewards End to Saffron Walden route extended to Howlett End Wimbish.
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*Paul Harvey
(acknowledgements to LOTS, Essex & Hertfordshire County Council, Richard Delahoy,
Harlowride and First)*

On a lighter note

As a boy, I remember walking up Lexden Road in Colchester one day, when a double-decker was moving away from a bus stop. The driver had just got away with a bit of speed when an Inspector ran up, jumped on to the back platform, holding on to the post at the centre. Sadly, for him, the post came away, top and bottom, leaving him running along the pavement, holding it up straight. What we said to each other can be imagined ! (This would have been in the late 1930s.)

John Hibbs

■ FIRST ESSEX BUSES LTD

New and acquired vehicles

From First London October 2009:

41239	S239KLM	Ds Dt SLF SFD212BR1WGW12634	Marshall C39.200	B29F	10.98
	Centrewest DML239				
41240	S240KLM	Ds Dt SLF SFD212BR1WGW12635	Marshall C39.301	B29F	10.98
	Centrewest DML240				
41241	S241KLM	Ds Dt SLF SFD212BR1WGW12636	Marshall C39.302	B29F	11.98
	Centrewest DML241				

41235/8/41 are B29F+28 or B27F+28+1 wheelchair. Unladen Weight is 7100kg. Dates of first registration are 17.10.1998, 21.10.1998 and 30.10.1998 respectively. 41241 still carries its original London fleet number DML241 in the cab and all were dual door when new. 41239 is for BN with 41240/1 for CF.

43845-8 are B29F+17 with an Unladen Weight of 6784kg. Alternative seatings are B23F+24 or B26F+17+1 wheelchair. All were first licensed 1.9.2005.

Trident 33152 returned to Clacton during early October but is thought to be destined for FEC at Norwich after route proving trials around Clacton and Harwich.

Allocation changes

Period 6: list dated 29th September 2009

These are, and always have been, taken from the Company's allocation sheet. For operational reasons there may sometimes be discrepancies with the actual situation on the ground.

FGC=First Group cascade, i.e. transfer to/from another First fleet

(A)=acquired, including vehicles on loan; Anc=Ancillary fleet; RES=reserve (spare/retained, licensed); D/L(S)=spare/retained (delicensed); D/L(D)=delicensed for disposal; DS=Driving School; PS=Paint Spare

31377 D/L-sold; 38790 CF-CN; 41235 RES-BN; 41238 RES-BN; 43742 BN-CN;
43743 BN-CN; 46120 D/L(D)-RES; 46144 DS-D/L(D); 47102 CN-RES; 47104 CN-D/L(D);
47227 RES-sold; 51803 D/L(D)-RES; 67040 D/L(D)-sold

Disposals (Period 6):

To Erith Commercial for scrap: 31377 47227 67040

Repaints (period 5): none

Area News - workings and sightings

[x] indicates route branding

Clacton (CN) & Harwich (DT)

On 10th September, CR30558 was working from DT on the 06.00 DT-CR 104, while DT42937 was on the 09.20 DT-CR 103 (usually 65651/2). From 17th, Primo CN57001 worked on loan to DT covering accident damage to DT44519 (sent away to ADL for repair), through to 4th October when its MOT expired; it then went to A Barham & Sons (Motor Engineers) awaiting replacement parts. CN57002 was sent to DT in lieu, but in the meantime DT44518 also suffered accident damage on 2nd October.

Colchester (CR)

September

1st CR34013 on 64A

3rd CR34301 on 63
 4th CR34013/4 on 64, CR67004 on 65
 5th CR61054 on 72
 7th CR60102, CR62407/9 on 71/72
 9th CR62410 on 72, CR65654 on 70, CR66811 on 71
 10th CR65688/9 on 70, CR66815 on 71
 14th CR62410 on 70
 16th CR67008 on 70
 17th CR61057 on 70
 28th CR34014 on 63, CR67005 on 64
 29th 38790 on Colchester 'U' shuttles

Chelmsford (CF) & Braintree (BE)

September

1st CF34815/8 both on 33, CF42921 on 352 am
 2nd BE42934 and CF53119 on 21, CR67007 on 70
 3rd CF34815 and CF47252 on 33, CR62409 on 70
 4th CF34815 on 48
 7th 41238 on 36 and 54/56, CF66799 on X30
 8th 41238 on 132
 9th CF34818 on 525 in place of BMC, 41235 on 54, 41238 on 21, BE53115 on 46, CF53137 on 73
 11th CF40733 on 70CF56004 still on X30
 14th CF34815 on 525
 15th 41235 on 56 and CF47252 on 33
 16th 41238 on 50 (10.04 arrival), CF42487 on 31X (10.05 to BOC) and CF42488 on 46 (17.46 departure)
 17th 41235 on 56
 18th BE42927 on 21
 19th CF46140 and CF53118 on 33
 20th CF66797 at Bow LUL
 22nd CF47252 on 33
 25th CF53112 on 42, CF53130 on 36 (10.41 SW-CF)
 26th 41235 on 42, CF42921 on 36 (09.41 SW-CF)
 27th CF69434 on rail replacement Shenfield-Romford-Newbury Park
 28th 47102 on 35128th CF53121 on 352am

October

1st VR 38790 on Anglo European service 618, CF41241 first noted in use (seen on 54), 47102 on 40/50
 4th CR66794, CR66814 and CF66818 on RRS at Shenfield
 7th CF34815 on 351 (18.05 ex CF)

Basildon (BN) & Hadleigh (HH)

September

10th BN31374 on 100, BN65666/8 on 100
 16th BN65626 [8] on 25
 23rd 46120 on 25B
 24th BN65666 on pm 25
 25th BN46828 on 25
 26th BN34012 on pm 25
 27th BN66801 on pm 25
 29th BN41235/8 first seen - on 5, 25B, 82 & 200
 30th 46120 on 82



Newly-acquired former First London Marshall Capital-bodied Dart 41240 (S240 KLM) in Chelmsford. Kevin Smith

Whilst Brentwood High Street undergoes major improvement works, buses have been diverted via William Hunter Way for six weeks and several bus stops installed. Arriva's 501 operates via Ingrave Road and Queen's Road during the same period, and Dart 3369 (K319CVX) is seen doing just that on 2nd October. Chris Stewart



October

4th BN43845 and BN43848 on newly-introduced Brentwood-Hutton-Shenfield Sunday circulars 80A/80C

Other News

One-time Essex resident and now Canadian-based member Paul Bateson disembarked from the cruise ship "Norwegian Jewel" [one of several in port at the time] at Halifax, Nova Scotia to be greeted by twelve Routemasters and, more interestingly, two former Eastern National VRs – XHK232X (3127), now DD37 (16-538-D) and LUA717V (3233, new to West Yorkshire) which is now their DD79 (16-538-D). Both are now owned by Absolute Charters/Gray Line (see <http://bcv.robsly.com/lua717v.html> and <http://bcv.robsly.com/xhk232x.html> for further histories).

Bristol RELH6G/ECW 1404 (VHK177L), the B51 prototype rebuild featured in EBN some months back, has changed hands – it is now with Julian Patterson of King's Lynn and we look forward to seeing it on the local rally scene during 2010.

Bristol MW coach 348 (YBD201), new to United Counties, appeared on ebay restored but without interior. It has a Gardner 5HLW engine as fitted immediately prior to disposal, its 6HLW having gone into one of 1349/56 or 1428 (of which interestingly 1356 is now preserved).

Sources: Own observations, with many thanks to *First Essex* and to R Appleton, P Ashton, A Bird, N Clark, T Clark, J Collins, D Edwards, M Farmer, D Flatman, J Podgorski, D Pretty, I Ransom, J Salmon, 'Solo', A Timms, TBL177M, R Wansbury, R West, R Whitley, the *Essex Bus*, *South West and British Buses Abroad in North America* y-groups, www.buslistsontheweb.co.uk, *Real Bus News*, LOTS, PSV Circle, 'Terminus', *Bristol VR South West Bus News* (<http://www.geocities.com/ndl642m>).

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

Chris Stewart

Arriva

■ ARRIVA SOUTHEND LTD.

Unexpectedly, native Leyland Olympians 5402/3 (H262/3 GEV) remain in service. It is understood one now needs to be retained because of heavy loadings on a school route. The other is due to withdrawn but as yet there is no single deck replacement allocated to Southend to enable this to occur. It is not clear at present how long they will remain in service.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Peter Ashton, Paul Brain, Richard Delahoy

Network Colchester

New Vehicles

105 YT59 NZM

106 YT59 NZN

These are Scania N230UD/East Lancs Olympus (H51/28F), due for route 1. 105 arrived at the start of October.

Vehicles Out

234 (G34 HKY) Scania/Northern Counties to Excel
300 (W427 CWX), 305 (Y295 PDN), 307 (YJ51 JWW) Optare Solos to Classic
529 (AY54 FRC) Dennis Dart SLF to Excel. 529 had received an LED display before transfer.

Dart East/Lancs 806 (M526 MPM) damaged in an accident at East Bergholt in March 2009 was removed from Colchester depot during September.

Branding/Other News

A further Dart SLF/Caetano to receive lilac branding for route 6 is 514, renumbered from 108 and fitted with an LED display.

Dart SLF 367 has received an LED destination display in place of blinds.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Richard Delahoy, John Podgorski, Keith Sadler

Centrebus / Trustybus

Dennis Dart SLF/UVG P844 KOT has been sold. *Ian Ransom*

Essex County Buses

The City 42 service, Broomfield Hospital - Galleywood, duly began on Saturday 3rd October, competing with First's 42. Buses initially displayed just '42', but now show 'C42'. A 15-minute frequency is scheduled during the day, requiring a PVR of six, although only five buses were noted by your sub-editor on the first day. **Service Changes** this month records First increasing the frequency of their 42 to 12 minutes from 19th October.

The City 42 allocation appears to be shared with the Bury routes and the notional PVR is drawn from:

T402 LGP	Dennis Dart SLF	SCC B31D	new 3/99	(1)
T74 WWV	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton B33D	new 3/99	(1)
T75 WWV	Dennis Dart SLF	Plaxton B33D	new 3/99	(1)
T414 LGP	Dennis Dart SLF	SCC B30D	new 5/99	(1)
T415 OUB	Optare Solo	Optare B25F	new 8/99	(2)
V930 VUB	Optare Excel	Optare B38F	new 10/99	(2)
V937 VUB	Optare Excel	Optare B30F	new 10/99	(2)
V938 VUB	Optare Excel	Optare B30F	new 10/99	(2)
V939 VUB	Optare Excel	Optare B30F	new 10/99	(2)
V119 LVH	Optare Excel	Optare B24D	new 12/99	(2)
AE08 DLF	ADL E200 Dart	MCV B37F	new 3/08	(1) (3)

- (1) ex-Stansted Transit Ltd., Gt. Notley.
- (2) ex-Home Counties Travel Ltd., Henham, but new to Meteor Parking Ltd. (Pink Elephant), Bishops Stortford. Some of these had been on hire to ST before its demise.
- (3) correcting EBN545

All are in the red/cream colour scheme with "?" fleetnames. V937 VUB and L119 LVH have been noted with the slogan 'Moving the people of Essex' on the nearside cove panel above

the door. As a legacy of their airport career, some of the Excels have extensive internal luggage racking, although this is now being removed.

The company's website (<http://essexcountybuses.com>), claims Essex County Buses to be "taking transport to a new level", and goes on to say that "... more services in Bury St Edmunds and Chelmsford are pending registrations ...". New route B3, Westley Estate - Town Centre in Bury has now been registered to commence on 27th November.

*Ian Ransom, David Harman, Chris Stewart,
Essex and East-Anglia-Buses y-groups, Essex Bus Photos and
East Anglian Bus Photos Google groups*

Heddingham Omnibuses

New vehicles

L380 EU59 AFF Dennis Dart SFD151AR49GY 11298
L381 EU59 AF3 Dennis Dart SFD151AR49GY 11299

Acquired vehicles

from Arriva Derby, 4626/9/43 via Ensign Bus

L372 R626 MNU Volvo Olympian YV3YNA41XWCO Northern Counties 28782 H47/29F
L373 R629 MNU Volvo Olympian YV3YNA419WCO Northern Counties 28790 H47/29F
L374 R643 MNU Volvo Olympian YV3YNA417WCO Northern Counties 29050 H47/29F
New to Derby City Transport Ltd., 3/98 (4626/9); Arriva Derby Ltd., 6/98 (4643).

from Arriva Fox County, 4605/2/6/8/12 via Ensign Bus

L375 P605 CAY Volvo Olympian YV3YNA213TCO Northern Counties 26352 H47/29F
L376 P602 CAY Volvo Olympian YV3YNA410TCO Northern Counties 26888 H47/29F
L377 P606 CAY Volvo Olympian YV3YNA412TCO Northern Counties 26892 H47/29F
L378 P608 CAY Volvo Olympian YV3YNA416TCO Northern Counties 27074 H47/29F
L379 P612 CAY Volvo Olympian YV3YNA412TCO Northern Counties 27105 H47/29F
New to Midland Fox Ltd. 10/96.

Vehicles withdrawn and sold

L124 B124 BOO Leyland Tiger
L233 F148 SPY Leyland Tiger
L245 SGR 780V Bristol VR
L287 L833 YDS Volvo B6
L303 L67 UNG Volvo B6
L304 L69 UNG Volvo B6
L319 N326 HUA Volvo B6
All to Ensign Bus.

L323 EK51 JBE Volvo B10M
L324 EK51 JAU Volvo B10M
Both to Plaxtons, Scarborough.

General

The three remaining VR's L251 (MRJ 8W), L254 (PWY 39W) and L255 (STW 30W) were observed at Clacton depot on 11th September, and L255 worked a Tendring College contract later that day.

*David Harman with thanks to Mr D R MacGregor of
Heddingham Omnibuses and RL Clark*

Regal Busways

Leyland Olympian/ECW B714 HVO is numbered 1202. Dennis Dart/Plaxton L4 YTB was still here (although withdrawn) in August, despite reports that it had been sold. Ex London Dennis Dart/Plaxton J105 DUV (505) has been withdrawn.

Recently acquired Dart S510 SJM and former demonstrator MAN/Wright Meridian WX08 DFN have appeared in a new livery of red with sundry maroon and cream elements. They also have a new fleetname in 'electronic circuit' style lettering. (see also inside rear cover).

Ian Ransom, David Harman



X211ONH at Billericay station on the recently introduced N2 service.. Kevin Smith

Stephensons of Essex

Olympian 881 (C81CHM) has been sold to Brijan Tours of Curdridge, Hants.

Ian Ransom with thanks to Lyn Watson



Regal Busways MAN/Wright WX08 DFN seen at Showbus in September. John Salmon

Stephenson's Scania/Optare Olympus 502 (EU09AUK) in Shenfield on rail replacement to Romford and Newbury Park on Sunday 4th October. Other vehicles seen were supplied by First Essex, Chambers, Swallow Coaches, Network Colchester, Epsom Coaches, Godward and Ensign.

Chris Stewart



Ensignbus

■ DEALER STOCK MOVEMENTS

Vehicles in

	<i>from</i>	
Arriva Midlands:		Olympian P612 CAY
Dublin Bus:		Volvo B6BLE's 99-D-6004-6/17-20
East London:		Tridents T683 KPU, V476/8/9 KJN, V122/35/7/47 MEV, Scania RDZ 6129, Delta J724 CYG
Glasgow CT (M Roulston):		RML2365/2553, Olympian C233 ENE
London General:		Darts R457/60/7/76/8/81/5 LGH
London General:		EVL3/4/6/21
London United:		Darts V558 -62 JBH, S302-5/8/9 MKH
Stagecoach West Scotland:		Darts P390-1 LPS, P396-7 BRS
Stagecoach Yorkshire:		Volvo B10Ms K700 DAO, L342 CCK

Vehicles out

	<i>to</i>	
Dart MPDs V558/6 1 JBH:		ACE Travel , Liverpool
Olympians G701/9 TCD, G342 KKW:		H344 SWA, G647 EVV:
		Alpine , Llandudno
Trident T690 KPU:		Amber Coaches , Rayleigh, Essex
Dublin Olympian 96-D-282, 300/1		now N729/27/30 JNO with
		AM-PM Travel , Birmingham
Volvo B10M K723 DAO:		Carters Coaches , Ipswich
Tridents T665/82 KPU:		Cedar Coaches , Bedford
Dart MPD EU06 KOX:		Central Buses , Birmingham
Dublin Olympian 97-D-338		now P604 SWC with
		Chalkwell Coaches , Sittingbourne, Kent
Trident T694 KPU:		Fords Coaches , Althorne, Essex
Olympians P602/12 CAY:		Heddingham Omnibuses , Essex.
Olympians R122/3 EVX:		Herberts Coaches , Shefford, Beds.
Darts R124/26/40/2/6/7/51/3 RLY:		London General
Volvo B6BLE's 99-D-6004/5/6/17:		McColls Coaches , Balloch
Dart N612 NGC, Olympian G904 SKP:		New Adventure Travel , Vale of Glamorgan
Dublin Olympian 98-D-20423/4		now S264/5 YOO with Redbridge Transport
DAF SB220 W176CDN:		Tates Travel , Barnsley
Dublin Olympian 97-D-368/71		now R93/4 LHK with TM Travel , Sheffield
Dart MPD EU06KOW:		Travelsure , Northumberland
BMC Falcon CN04RFZ:		TWH , Noak Hill, Essex
Delta's K634 HWX, J724 CYG Scania RDZ 6123:		Geoff Ripley , Barnsley

■ ENSIGNBUS CO. LTD.

Acquired vehicle

from Stagecoach in Lincolnshire (21076)
705 L456 JCK Volvo B10L 00005 / Saffle 7504 B43F

Now re-registered GVV 205 and allocated as the regular vehicle on service X80. New in 5/1994 as a Volvo demonstrator with Mainline Group (403), it subsequently passed to Yorkshire Terrier (Andrews (Sheffield) Ltd.) (2338) and to Roadcar (836) in 2001.

Disposals

The solitary East Lancs Spryte-bodied Dart 714 (P514 CVO) has been withdrawn and sold to Arriva Midlands.

David Harman, with thanks to Ross Newman of Ensign Bus Co. Ltd.

Other Operators

ABACUS, Crays Hill Leyland Olympian/ECW C104 CHM has gone for scrap.

AMBER, Rayleigh Acquired is LDV Convoy X533 HJM.

BARKER, Roydon Volvo B10M/Ikarus XIL 5455 has gone to Glenferry, Blarney, Eire. Acquired from AAA, Luton is JIL 3125, a MAN 10.180/Caetano.

BELLS BUSES, East Tilbury This new operator has Iveco 45-10 minicoach P335 GKR and LDV Convoy P590 XBW, the latter from Eds Minibus Hire, East Tilbury.

COOK, Rochford Scania K113/Irizar N11 CHN has been sold to SJ Coaches, Hornchurch.

EAGLES TRAVEL, Harlow LDV Convoy S843 GWW has been sold.

ELSOM TRAVEL, Stanford-le-Hope

Acquired some time ago, but only recently reported is Mercedes Benz 412D V126 NGO.

FARGOLINK, Rayne Acquired is Ford Transit BG52 VLA.

FORD, Althorne Dennis Javelin/Caetano A16 AWF was registered back to J858 HHU and sold to Daughton, Lixnaw, Eire.

GRAHAMS COACHES, Kelvedon Acquired from Ann's Executive Coaches, Worcester is VU53 FYR (J200 ANN) a Mercedes Benz Sprinter/Excel.

GRAYS MINIBUS TRAVEL, Grays This new operator has LDV Maxus BU07 SFF.

HADDY, Stanford-le-Hope This new operator has Ford Transit SF03 JSX.

HARDY Rochford Acquired from RB



Lodge's have sold their Metrobus triaxle with the iconic advertismnt for Chelmer Valley High School to Flagfinders of Braintree. The advertising has been removed by Flagfinders and Lodge have replaced it by a newer triaxle Olympian J534 CEV with coach seats, air conditioning etc shown here at Duxford.

John Salmon

Also at Duxford was a modern Lodge coach featuring their preserved Bedford OB on the side.
John Salmon



- Travel, Kettering is DAF SB2305/Van Hool GLZ 4748 (D238 YRX).
- H&E MINIBUS Wickford** LDV Convoy P359 KAV has been sold.
- KNIGHTS, Witham** Acquired is Citroen Relay KE03 NWD.
- LODGES, High Easter Bedford** YMT/Plaxton XNM 820S has been sold. Ex Hong Kong MCW Metrobus F84 UJN (DZ 1845) has gone to Flagfinders, Braintree. Dennis Javelin/Plaxton F882 RFP has been acquired from Harrod, Downham Market. It joins sister F883 RFP here.
- MANNING, Purfleet** Recent additions are Ford Transits P11 SBJ (AK06 BPE) and AG04 MYL.
- NEW HORIZON, Frating** Ford Transits MA03 WWK, LR05 LWU and LR05 KBV have been withdrawn. Iveco minibus GN51 CWM has been sold. Dennis Dart/Plaxton M65 VJO was renumbered from 31 to 65 in July.
- P&M, Crays Hill** Volvo B12/Plaxton SF06 WDK/WDU have been sold. This company has withdrawn from National Express work.
- RICHMON FOUR WHEEL DRIVE, Stapleford Tawney** Acquired is LDV Convoy S862 GWW.
- RIVERVIEW, Stanford-le-Hope** This new operator has Ford Transit LG54 FZP (a non PSV).
- SAINT CLOUD, Rochford** Acquired is J2 SUP an EOS 180Z, new to Supreme, Southend.
- SIMONS BUS, Wickford** LDV Convoy S346 UEW has been sold.
- SM TRAVEL/OLYMPIAN Harlow** Acquired from Travel London are DAF SB3000/Van Hool Y304/14 HUA. DAF SB3000/Plaxton R200 SPK has been re-registered WKZ 2463.
- SWT South Woodham Ferrers** LDV Convoy P704 UFR, is no longer owned.
- TALISMAN, Gt Bromley** Acquired from Last Passive, Dublin is Setra S415HD EW03 NLY (03-D-36555).
- THORNS OF RAYLEIGH** This operator is not to be confused with APT. The only vehicle owned is T69 FBN a Volvo B10M/Caetano, acquired from Bullock, Cheadle.
- TONY GLEW Gt Tey** Acquired from Cruisers, Redhill is Dennis Dart/Wadham Stringer CHZ 2948 (L297 VRV).
- TURNERS, Little Maplestead** Vehicles sold are DAF 400 L515 BBJ and Toyota/Caetano L991 CRY.
- TWH, Noak Hill** Acquired are Volvo B10M/Plaxton S51 UBO and Dennis R410/Caetano FJ53 VDN. Scania L113/East Lancs M298 TWB has been sold.
- VICEROY, Saffron Walden** Mercedes Benz 0404 W368 EOL has been sold.
- WILSONS TRAVEL Grays** Acquired are Ford Transits YP51 WZH and YP06 WTR.

Ian Ransom, with thanks to PSV Circle



Don's 60th

On 30th August, Don's of Dunmow celebrated 60 years of operation, with a gathering of historic vehicles and party for invited guests. Dave Arnold was among them, and took the pictures.

Don Hale had served as a driver during the Second World War having been called up to the Essex Yeomanry two days before war was declared. After hostilities ceased, he started a car hire service using two old Packards as well as running a petrol station and garage in Takeley.

In 1949 he bought a secondhand Duple bodied Bedford OB to undertake a school contract as well as numerous small private hire jobs, mostly for pub football, darts and domino teams. He also did sub contract work for Biss Bros of Bishops Stortford. As the business expanded, he was joined by his brother Jim Hale. A little later, a small depot was acquired in Dunmow that had previously been used by Hicks Bros of Braintree.

Several other operators were subsequently acquired, one of which enabled Don's to establish a presence in Bishops Stortford,

where a separate garage was set up. Don's then began operating its own programme of excursions and tours.

In 1973, a site in Parsonage Downs, Dunmow was purchased and this forms the basis for the present well-equipped ten-bay garage and workshop.

Five years later, the two sides to the business were separated, with the Bishops Stortford operation under Jim Hale, set up to trade as Lea Valley Coaches. Don Hale continued at Dunmow under the existing Don's name, with a new business partner, Rita Harvey.

Since then, Don's has pulled out of the increasingly competitive coach tour market and now concentrates successfully on school work and private hire, with Steve Harvey, Rita Harvey's son, as managing director. A modern and very individualistic fleet, together with some 'heritage' vehicles ensures a steady flow of custom for one of the county's best-known coaching names

*David Harman
with acknowledgements to Bus & Coach Buyer ~
20 February 2009*

Don's 60th

anti-clockwise from left:

A trio of Bedford OBs ~ fr
889), Mulley's of Bury
High Easter (TMY 700

Cyril Kenzie's superb Pla
GUP 743C.

Don's Plaxton-bodied Beo

Don Hale and 60th birthd

The most famous Don's co
bodied Bedford SBG M

Dennis Javelin/Marcopolo
up representing the m



in pictures

om Felix of Sudbury (DBU
(PV 9371) and Lodge's of
().

ton-bodied Bedford VAL

ford VAS ETC 760B.

ay cake.

ach ~ 1957 Yeates Europa-
JKY 151.

o M707 HBC leads a line-
modern fleet.

All: Dave Arnold



Musings on the seafront

some personal memories from John G Lidstone

When I first worked on 'seafronts', conducting Southend Transport PD3s, my driver Peter Bray introduced me to how the seafront should be 'worked'. It was different to 'top road' in that you never went in or out of the town centre (then) and really saw inspectors other than the odd 'purge' and/or inspector who fancied a bit of seaside scenery.

The timetable was treated with a little more slack, in that you ran the service to carry as many people as you could, keeping them as happy as you could. This might mean hanging on at the Pier longer than time, to gain those extra punters (jolly banter from the platform would nearly always work). Maybe taking a minute or two extra at the Kursaal to have a fresh doughnut – but telling your passengers that, so they could have one too. Leaving East Beach a bit late to allow your punters time to finish getting their ice creams or shake the sand off their shoes (whilst you could do the same also!).

For me, the view at East Beach was always a joy to behold on a nice day, seeing across towards Margate and Ramsgate rather than just across the Thames Estuary. My parents lived at Thames Drive, so that was a handy watering point (literally on some occasions, for bus as well as driver!) and I recall 'Daddy Giles' great amusement when I told him I'd just bought a property at East Beach "it's typical of you to have one house at each end of the 68" he said!

As a headstrong youth of just 20, I enjoyed the freedom of seafront conducting – enjoying all the scenery, chatting up all and sundry and keeping them happy, whilst learning 'the ropes'. I always had free tucker, courtesy of Peter's knowledge. But summer 1976 was a nightmare for conducting – and I held the record for the largest number of tickets ever on a 68 shift (879, and I took £97!!). I was glad when I was driving for the 1977 season – and my joy was complete when we heard two EN KSWs were coming on hire as we were to cover 67s all season as EN couldn't.

So at the tender age of 21, I was trundling up and down with crashbox Bristol Ks, and I'm proud to say conductors asked to work with



me as they liked the fact I didn't crunch the gears!! I loved them (the KSWs that is) so much that I'd often see if I could do half a late shift after my full shift of 67s. Often I did – the only regular overtime I ever did – as the KSWs were so light to drive. I never once did overtime on seafronts with those heavy PD3s with double clutch springs to deter clutch-riding. Heavy traffic meant your knee and leg really hurt – and I blame my current knee weakness on those heavy old Leylands.

I did six seasons in all on the seafront – and so earned the nickname "seafront foreman". By then, I'd become fed up with Derek Giles' constant quips (he called me "scruff" as I had long fuzzy hair, which he hated), and so I went for the ultra smart look. But that wasn't before a heinous inspector 'booked' me for driving a PD3 'dead' ('car to garage' as we called it) at after 11pm at night without wearing my jacket. The next day, as I was told "you must wear your jacket" I was so annoyed that I wore just my jacket to sign on (and trousers etc in case you were wondering). You can imagine my amusement when just that same thing became a plot line in an *On the Buses* film! Then, we had to wear jackets, except the high summer

months, but were only allowed to take jackets off during daylight hours and when the sun was shining.

But in case you're thinking the Fleet News columnist is some kind of oik, I did have claim to a unique distinction. For several of my seafront seasons, I was a university student – and my regular conductor (Andrew Laycock) was also a student, so we were an all-student crew. This reached the *News of the World* who then photographed me and my conductor, spreading the story worldwide (literally, as I found my story wrapping up some crockery from an old edition of the *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong some years later, to my Aunt's gob-smacked amazement) – we were 'Britain's Brainiest Bus Crew'. Oh dear, the trouble that caused in the garage.....

But back to seafronts. So in my new smartness campaign, I bought new shirts with epaulette fixings, and bought some dark blue epaulettes which I duly wore, along with a special tie, complete with SCT cap badge, which I'd repainted in the correct colours of the Southend coat of arms. No longer the SCT summer jacket, with cuffs rolled up (another seafront tradition). I used to smarten the buses too – I've never let on before, but for my pets, ST 314 (PHJ 953) and EN KSW 2383 (WNO 479), I used to bring in a tin of Duraglit and polish their radiators a few times a month, as well as the usual cleaning of cab glass and mirrors.

All too soon it was all over. First, my dear old KSWs came to an end (Daddy Giles having banned my overtime stint as he had to pay 3p a mile 'hire charge' to EN, so he said it was PD3 or nowt for my overtime. Even though I offered to pay the mileage charge, he wouldn't have it!). I was honoured to drive the last one in September 1979, duly adorned with a plaque (which for once Richard didn't make!) which was fixed to my favourite 2383.

Then in 1980 our PD3s bowed out, and as my favourite 314 had already gone for preservation, so I had a rather less attractive 311 to finish them off with – with my then regular conductor, the late and missed Andy Meadows.

Uncharacteristically, I actually preferred the Fleetlines (370-3 variety) to the PD3s, as they

were so light and easy to drive. It was bliss not to have those horrible clutches to hold down in traffic – and you could chat to your conductor and supervise the platform. We had some fun with the PA systems too (in a controlled non-annoying way) – we'd advertise Peter's haunts for punters and so earn those free ice-creams, doughnuts, chips and burgers. Whereas I heard some crews doing daft things (eg playing radios into them) which must have driven punters mad, I only ever had appreciative comments for the "helpful and amusing comments"....and some tips!

The Fleetlines would happily burble along at the better 20-25mph, whereas PD3s wouldn't dawdle like that below 25mph without dropping to 3rd gear (which reminds me of the bet I won with my conductor, when I literally drove 313 all the way from Leigh to East Beach only using 4th gear – and we picked up two passengers too!!). The awful things we used to do (and no, folks, no PD3 was harmed by that stint, I was very gentle with the clutch, which meant we took about 5 minutes to leave the upward-sloping Thames Drive terminus). Oh how my secrets are all flowing out....

On the positive side I remember getting a round of applause from my passengers at East Beach when 313's starter failed. Its engine had stopped on a dodgy spot for its worn starter ring gear. (313 was a real cow, a total slug compared with 311/2/4, and I hated it, but it never failed so you couldn't ever get rid of it). It made a hideous scraping noise. I knew that I could fix it, so told people I'd get them on their way (they looked worried by the noise which it had made). I upped the bonnet, pulling the fanblades of the radiator round as much as I could (a trick I'd learnt from the Duty Crew). Back in the cab, and it started perfectly!

On another bad day, an August Bank Holiday, 314 ran out of fuel – right in the middle of the road, right under the Pier Bridge (we were instructed to move toward centre road). My favourite just would not re-start. The solution? First gear, use the starter and very gently ease it to the kerb using the clutch. I called the garage from a cafe (no mobiles or radios in the late 70s) – the road was then clear. The passengers had snacks from the cafe (they were delighted) and we were on our way 15 mins later after the Duty

Crew had popped down and bled the fuel system after filling the tank from their van. No buses had fuel guages then, and buses didn't run out of fuel as they were always brimmed full each night on running in.

Two breakdowns they couldn't sort were with 311 and 312. Pulling away from Leigh Church towards Thames Drive on a 68 on 311, I pressed the clutch to engage 3rd gear. The pedal fell to the floor and there was a humungous bang from under the floor - instantly, as I stopped, bits of metal were rolling out from under the bus. Its clutchplate had shattered, forcing bits of clutch out through the bellhousing itself, blowing a huge hole in it. Miserable old git Harry Yolland on the Duty Crew duly reported me to Daddy Giles as he'd seen me taking a photo of 311 with bits of clutch all down the road. 312? I was poodling along one sunny morning in top gear at 25mph when it sounded like someone was suddenly pile-driving into the engine (a kind of brrrrr-bang-bang-bang etc). Stopping instantly, it was apparent the big ends had totally failed. I phoned the Garage "can you carry on...." they said. I hopped in, started the engine and called back. "Hear that hammering" I said? "yes"....."that's 312" I said. "Oh, we'll get the Duty Crew and a bus to you then...." came the reply. 312, fastest of the open-toppers, then gained the engine from withdrawn 344 and was never the same again. I was saddened by both mishaps (not of my making in any way) as it was a matter of pride not to 'fail' with a halfcab.

One of my favourite Fleetline seafront memories was that, in their first season (with small drain holes in the top deck) they'd fill with water at East Beach if there was a downpour. Arriving at some speed, from East Beach, after a downpour, a couple ran out from the Shoebury Common stop. As I slowed down quite fast, a huge whoosh of water came down the stairwell (straight from the top deck, missing the stairs) like an upturned bath. As I opened the doors, the (accidental) timing was exquisite, a huge wave of water whooshing out of the doors across the people as they boarded. "@#%\$ me, (said the lad) you've got more water in there than we've got out here !!!".

I loved seafronts - every day, the sea and sky would look different. I loved the route and the people (even some of the conductors

too!). But one bad day stands out as an all time Bad Day. Carnival Day. I started the day with FLF 2300 (RWC 608). Its clutch was hopelessly out of adjustment and was slipping like blazes by the time I'd reached Victoria Circus. Back to the garage and a bus change. I got 2302 (MVX 885C), a favourite. Diverted via special route (Crowstone Road into First Avenue), as I turned the corner there was a horrible bang from underneath and the steering suddenly had slack in it. A nearby policeman took off his helmet, dived underneath the front (the engine was still running) and produced some sheered off bolts and said "are these yours?". To be honest, I didn't know, but said "probably". Looking underneath, it was clear 2302 was going no further and the PC was right. I then got Leopard 216 (MJN 216F) and how I hated having these on a hot day. Before I handed it over, it started boiling, leaving trails of water every time we stopped. In the afternoon, I had 2303 (RHK 348D). Going up Chalkwell Avenue, the engine developed a hideous knock, as bad as 312. Told to carry on or else by Daddy Giles, I limped the FLF to Cluny Square and back to the Kursaal, but refused to take it up the hill again, fearing the engine would literally blow, and take my legs with it. Another hateful Leopard turned up, 218 (MJN 218F) I think. That completed my shift without breaking down (they said there wasn't another bus left in the garage that would fit under the Pier!!!). But then I had overtime (which I rarely did). On the pumps on the way in, the pump man said "put it on the pits will you" (we usually didn't). Putting 218 as bid, the said Miserable Old Git Harry Yolland then sprang out of the pits like a fire cracker, F'ing and B'ing at me "what the @#%\$ are you doing putting a bus on the pit....". I suggested I'd rather not do any overtime as I'd had more than enough. My thanks - Daddy Giles said "thanks for wrecking half the fleet on the one day in the year when we need all of them".... but I'd done nothing to deliberately harm any of them. It was a hard life, then.

Which reminds me of another Very Bad Thing I did do, when working as a crew some time earlier on the PD3s.

The last trip from East Beach at night on 'lates' was always known as "The Kursaal Flyer" (after the carnival float), as you never, ever, picked anyone up and you ran only to the Kursaal (this was after 11pm!). Back in

PD3 days, I'd learnt that you could hit a big flood puddle and get a whoosh of water to go right over the top deck, and watch it in your offside mirror coming down the offside. (I promise you this is true). I'd only give this a bash if there were no passengers aboard and if there was no traffic (as all forward visibility was completely obscured too). Often, water would whoosh in between the bell housing and floor too.

On the Kursaal flyer night, I'd been passing a huge lake carefully all afternoon (where the HM Customs & Excise computer hall was being built). But on the last trip – no passengers – no traffic!!! My conductor and I had been walking on the beach as the sky had cleared and it was now a bright starlit warm evening. We came back to our bus (312 if I recall). My conductor braced himself for the bow-wave and whoosh. A fantastic splash! Such satisfaction.

As we approached the Cambridge the bell rang. I asked my conductor "surely, there's nobody on – there wasn't was there...?". We'd seen nobody at the Beach at all, not a living soul. I passed by the stop, as we thought it must have been water in the bell circuit (stranger things had happened). The bell rang again. "Go upstairs and make sure we've nobody up there – they'll be soaked if they weren't at the front, too!!!" I said.

Soon enough, two bedraggled teenagers appeared, covered in mud and leaves from head to foot, dripping wet. I was so shocked – as we genuinely hadn't seen them – I jumped down to personally apologise and see if there was anything I could do to make amends. The lad said "I knew the tide was coming in but not THAT @#?% HIGH...." (oh dear, I thought). To my amazement, he (and she) then burst out laughing. "We sneaked on when you two were strolling along the beach, and then we kept our heads down for a bit of a kiss and cuddle. It's all right, we'll be laughing about this tomorrow" they said. My conductor and I crossed ourselves, thanked God, and retired 312 to base without a word, parking up without further ado.

But that wasn't the end of it! Seafronts were the only buses not to use the buswash each night on run in (so the seats wouldn't be wet etc).

Next day, I had spare duty. "Driver Lidstone"

200 [my pay number] to control, please, Driver Lidstone" came the tannoy call in the garage. "Yup, what do you want" I said. "We've had an extraordinary call from conductor (can't remember the name) he says the top deck of his seafront is covered in sand and mud and says it's too dirty for service – can you go and change it over with 311 please....". (OOOPS I thought, the secret's out....). Pulling up at the Kursaal, I was immediately taken upstairs by the amazed crew early in their shift. "Look at this bloody lot – never seen anything like it, have you....?". True words. The whole top deck was literally brown with mud from my building-site pass-by 'whoosh' the night before.

With trepidation, I crept back to the Garage. "There'll be a to-do about this, I thought". The solution: run 312 through the buswash en-route to the garage. "Just thought I'd help clean it up a bit....it was a dreadful mess – wonder how all that mud got all the way up there" was the phrasing I recall using when reporting 312 back to base. "Yes, it was far too dirty for service" said I....

Anyway, enough of all this, as I'll probably get retrospectively booked and sent up to see Mr Giles at this rate.

I hope you enjoyed reading just a few of my seafront musings (an Essex Bus News exclusive first appearance!) – they'll all be in my book one day, if I ever get the time to write it!

John G Lidstone



Transports of Delight ~ Memoirs of a Bus Anorak

from Ted Miles

I enjoyed reading Terry Challis's "Memoirs of a Bus Anorak" relating to his time with EN schedules in the 1950s (EBN540 - April). I was the schedules representative at Basildon depot from 1965 to 1967. Charlie English, the head of the Schedules Department would make a point of coming to the depot to show details of changed timetables, which was normally twice a year.

The X10 rota was my baby. It was always Charlie's intention to share the X10 work evenly between Southend (SD) and Basildon (BN). However, at Basildon, we normally managed 55% as I had agreed we would operate the 151s between Basildon and Southend. This was important to him as it included the 10.50pm 151 from Southend to Basildon. This was a very busy journey, especially on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and saved dead mileage for SD. It was also agreed that Hadleigh depot (HH) would operate the X7s to Canvey as neither SD or BN wanted this variation to the main X10. The X10 earned high revenue and enabled us to work a fair amount of overtime on duplicates.

Ken Branch was to my knowledge, always the number two at Basildon. Ken Cox was in charge, having arrived from Brentwood depot. George Digby, (ex-Digby's of West Bergholt) was the man we reported to regarding any problems. A very good man and if we said a 'dupe' was needed on certain journeys, he listened and made it happen. Due to many problems with late running, it was Charlie English and myself that persuaded top management to concede and give ten minutes extra running time between Southend and Kings Cross; 15 minutes more if running to Victoria.

However, I left the company in 1968 as I made it very clear that I would never agree to one-man-operation on the X10 (later 400). The X10 was a unique double-decker coach service with a tremendous amount of luggage on certain journeys and many

elderly passengers that needed help. To have the head man of schedules agreeing with me that OMO was undesirable was indeed a sorry state of affairs. Passengers left in droves, firstly when the VRs arrived - and then left! And when finally, OMO (or OPO) came - the predictable happened and what was a profitable route became a loser!!

I used to have many conversations with Charlie English who knew every route inside out. He always reckoned that route 107 (Clacton - Walton) was one of the best paying routes, even ahead of the 251, when calculating receipts of pence per car mile.

Having messed up the X10, the powers-that-be later came up with the "City Saver". This was built up brilliantly, but alas, like the X10, is now gone. Another story: management always knows best!!! There's some good busmen out there - alas not listened to!!

from Bob Williamson

Whilst on holiday at Clacton in August 1965 (same time as the article) I made a few notes on allocations etc. and the list on page 27 (EBN545 - September) seems slightly in error. 1220 and 1222 (LS) were both at CN and had been for some years but I have no record of 1225 or 1228. Also MW 1358 was at CN.

Also at Clacton in 8/65 were Chelmsford - allocated Bristol K's 2222 and KSW 2318. No full details of 2222 but I recall that it had a CN destination fitted at front only. 2318 however retained its full set of CF blinds. This meant it was used mainly (if not exclusively) on Ser.107 as the destinations 'CLACTON' and 'WALTON' were conveniently on CF blinds!

2614



Eastern National had one of the largest fleets of FLFs – 247 were delivered between 1960 and 1968, but what stood out from the crowd were the 15 fitted out as coaches for London Express services (principally the X10). Crosville had broadly similar coaches for the North Wales Coast expresses and Thames Valley some with coach seats for their London services, but EN surpassed even these with their last five coaches new in 1968 (2610-4), which were the 31ft semi-automatic gearbox variant unique to EN (the Scottish Bus group had 31ft FLFs but with manual gearboxes). 2614 (AVX975G) was EN's last new half cab and numerically the last

Stewart Staff (left) and Philip Higgs (right) of the BusWorks pose with owner Paul Harrison and 2614 at Southend Seaway Coach Park on 26th September 2009 – the X10 and 151/251 left from the other side of the car park during the late 1960s/early 1970s.

(Chris Stewart)



Displaying the later coach livery and seen while on hire to United Counties, 2614 awaits departure from Oxford's Gloucester Green Bus Station on the joint UCOC/City of Oxford 131 to Bedford, which it will reach nearly three hours later. (the late Andy Meadows' collection)



On 5th September 1976, 2946 pulls out of Basildon Bus Station looking seemingly little different to the 47 extra long FLFs delivered to EN in 1967/68 – although the half height upper deck rear emergency exit window is one of the clues to its coach origins. (Chris Stewart)

Lodekka chassis; delivered new to Prittlewell on 16 August 1968, it was one of only five FLFs to receive G- suffix registrations.

2610-4 carried cream livery with a green band and green wings when new, unlike the earlier coaches which had green below the lower deck windows. On first repaint, however, the 'semis' also gained this livery. In 1971 AVX975G became 9614 in the Tillings fleet. From March 1973 until January 1975 it was loaned, with a number of other FLF coaches, to United Counties at Bedford and on return was converted by EN's Central Works from CH37/16F to a bus (H40/30F) becoming 2946. It served at Southend depot until 13 June 1981 when it delicensed for disposal after working on the 251 – this being last day of FLFs and of Wood Green depot. Initially bought by Lyn Watson and kept at Canvey, AVX was later sold by him to Ensign but bought back again nearly three years later by Paul Harrison.

Repainted in bus livery and rallied as such for about five years, Paul and friends started

to return it to coach specification in 1993.

Paul spent five years working in Germany so progress was slow, but coach seats were obtained from an Alder Valley VR (LPF596P) and many interior fittings were reconstructed from scratch using ECW drawings which Lyn had fortuitously obtained. Finally, in June 2008, 2614 was sent to the BusWorks in Blackpool for completion of the interior (particularly the rear luggage area) and a repaint to coach livery, returning to Essex 15 months later. On Saturday 26 September, AVX once again headed from Southend to London Victoria (by a somewhat more direct route than the X10) accompanied by Craig Mara's unique LDL prototype 2510 (236LNO), turning more than a few heads en route. There was a brief stop in Clay Hill Road to say hello to Bill Cansick, now 94, whose habit of photographing EN vehicles from all angles was of immense use in the restoration of 2614 and has served countless other enthusiasts, and who was clearly delighted to have seen an X10 double deck coach back on the road again some 37 years since they were displaced by MW

coach conversions and dual purpose RELHs.

Many thanks are due to Paul and all involved for their perseverance with the project and for the opportunity to hear the wonderful SCG gearbox noise again – I well remember, aged 9, the first semi-auto FLF bus for Brentwood (2885) passing my Prep School on a test run and being amazed by the mixture of sounds, and later on of lying

in bed in Hutton hearing them storm up Bishop's Hill on the 151/251 until very late at night. Sadly I never travelled on an X10 (although I vividly remember coming home from Romford once on an FLF coach on the 251) but have now made up for it!

Chris Stewart, with some of the notes kindly supplied by Paul Harrison



A sight not seen since 1972! 2614 (with 2510) inside Victoria Coach Station on 26th September.

(Chris Stewart)

One of the most prolific local EN photographers of the late 1960s and 1970s, William (Bill) Cansick was quite moved to find 2614 and 2510 outside his front door during their run to London.

(Chris Stewart)

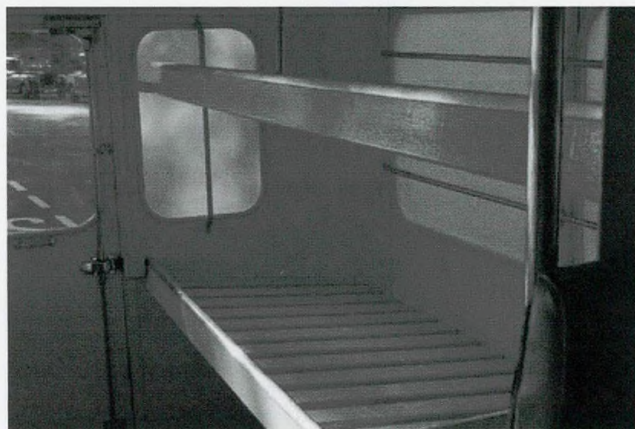


With a heritage RM just visible to the left, 2614 and 2510 laying over in the Aldwych while the participants were treated to an excellent buffet reception and presentation by Paul Harrison and Philip Higgs at the London Transport Museum.

(Chris Stewart)

Coach seats and luggage racks all had to be sourced or made and reinstated – this is the upper deck of 2614.

(Chris Stewart)



The even trickier bits – the rear luggage racks all had to be built from scratch, considerably aided by ECW drawings but far from straightforward even so!

(Chris Stewart)



Regal Busways R510 SJM in Chelmsford in the new livery. Kevin Smith

Brentwood diversions (see page 8): Imperial SN05HDF (recently repainted all over green with a gold band) passes the back of the old Thermos site on 2nd October. Chris Stewart





Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group
www.essexbus.org.uk