

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 688 August 2021



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



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688 for EBM 688



Left: Eastern National BE4500 (**B688** BPU), Leyland Olympian coach / ECW, at Portman Road, Ipswich on 8 April 1985 on a private hire contract for Ipswich Town FC to carry supporters to an away match against Norwich City FC. In front of 4500 is Leyland Tiger / Alexander BS1125.

Below: First Essex Scania L94UB / Wrightbus Solar 65**688**, allocated to Colchester, leaves Harwich Station on a 103 to its home town on 6 March 2015.

Bottom: At the same location but nearly 33 years earlier, Eastern National DT1202 (BNO **688T**), Bedford YMT / Duple Dominant II, on 27 June 1982.

All **Robert Appleton**





Above: Flashback to August last year before Braintree High Street was closed to buses. Heritage liveried 37007 on route 70 on 12 August 2020. **David Moth**

Right: A year later on, work on pedestrianising the High Street continues. This is where buses used to turn left from Fairfield Road into the High Street after leaving the Bus Park. 21 July 2021. **Adam Kelleher**



Front Cover

Ensignbus's stunning Transbus Enviro 500 open topper 368, 68 EB, entered service on route 68 on 26 July 2021. It is seen the next day at the Kursaal, turning from Southchurch Avenue into Marine Parade. The vinyl swoop across the doors and first windows is a styling feature to match the Ayats Bravos also used on service 68. **Richard Delahoy.** Full details on page 18. This is a fitting introduction to our two-part Summer Special on open toppers which commences on page 23.

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Owen stocks a wide range of colour photos, please send an SAE
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February to December inclusive will pay a pro-rata subscription
calculated at £2.20 per month. For example, a member joining
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A statement of our compliance with the GDPR is available on our
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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
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publication in any particular month.

Printed by

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

Target Dates for EBM 689

Reports to Sub-Editors

Sub-Editor drafts to Editor

Dispatch by Printers

28 August

3 September

on or before **13 September**

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 4th
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 members of its
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Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors published.

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Group Notices

The Running Card by Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Sunday 15 August: It is planned, weather dependent, to have a running day on Ensignbus's Southend open-top route 68, featuring some unexpected guest vehicles. For details please check our Facebook page nearer the date or other social media.

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

Saturday 21 August: Routemasters to Imber.

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

Saturday / Sunday 28-29 August: Bedford 90 Leighton Buzzard Light Railway, Pages Park.

Sunday 5 September: RF and Friends - celebrating 70 years of the RF. Epping-Ongar Railway. Bus connections from Epping (339) plus Chingford Station (718, only at 1000). Routes and tours from North Weald EOR Station.

Saturday / Sunday 25-26 September: Trolleybus Weekend at East Anglia Transport Museum Carlton Colville.

Sunday 26 September: Showbus, Hertfordshire Show Ground, Redborne

Saturday 2 October: Theydon Bois Transport Bazaar, Village Hall 1100-1530

Sunday 10 October: South East Bus Festival, Kent Showground, Detling. <https://southeastbusfestival.wixsite.com/sebf>.

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

Magazine Changes

Many thanks to everyone who has written in regarding the changes to the magazine made last month. There has been overwhelming support for these and many positive comments which are very much appreciated.

Double Dutch

Richard Delahoy tells of a trip to the Tulip Rally in Holland in March 1980 on page 24. Keeping with the Dutch flower theme, on 20 July 2021, one of their large trailers is partly blocking the turning bay at Brentwood Station whilst delivering to the nearby 'Little Florist'. The driver of NIBS 450 has had to stay on the main road and then reverse in order to turn round. **Adam Kelleher**



Follow Up Photos

Some follow up photos to others that have appeared in the magazine recently.



Above: The mainly white Urban 2 livery applied to only three First Essex vehicles, 69429, 69432 and 69434, was illustrated on the rear cover of EBN 685. Above is a comparison of this livery and the more complicated Urban livery that preceded it. 66818 on route 42A in front of 69429 on route 42B opposite Chelmsford Bus Station on 28 April 2021. **Adam Kelleher** Right: 1055 / 2207, EAM 612, was one of six Bristol K / ECWs acquired by Eastern National from Wilts & Dorset in June 1963. A rear photo of it was included in EBN 685, taken in the Maldon garage yard after withdrawal from service in February 1965. The PSVC record it as passing to Twell (dealer), Sherburn the same month, then to M W Smaller (Mick Smaller's Luxury Coaches), Barton-upon-Humber, Lincolnshire, in March 1965 before being withdrawn in October that year. No further disposal is recorded. **Alan Tebbit** visited Barton-upon-Humber, spending the night at the home of Shepherdson's Coaches, and managed to capture this rare colour photo of EAM 612 with its new owner.



Below: The 'old order' of a CentreBus Solo in Hertford Bus Station in 2015 was illustrated on the inside front cover of EBN 685. The 'new order', with three Central Connect Solos, is shown below, RGZ 7809 (ex YK05 CDO) in new livery, RRZ 5654 (ex SF05 NXE) in Trustybus colours and RGZ 7807 (ex YJ55 YGN) still in as acquired First Kernow two-tone green. 14 May 2021. **Owen Woodliffe**





Left, top to bottom. Also on the inside front cover of EBN 685, the top photo showed Central Connect's Solo YJ09 MHO climbing Widbury Hill on Ware local route M4 on 15 April this year, passing the former Plaxton (originally Thurgood) Coachworks site, now occupied by over 70 homes. When the development was first completed some years ago **Alan White** noticed that the road on to it had been given an appropriate name and took these photos at the time.



Further to Richard Delahoy's article 'Information Fails to Impress' in EBN 686, by 17 July 2021, when **David Edwards** took this photo, routes 52, 70X, 344 and H2, which, as Richard pointed out, no longer run, have been removed from this bus stop outside Broomfield Hospital, by being crudely painted out. (Compare with photo on page 27 of EBN 686.) However, all the other bus stops there still have incorrect displays.



Further to the Viceroy photo and caption on the inside rear cover last month, Alan Osborne has provided additional information. The Viceroy route from Saffron Walden to Dunmow via Wimbush and Thaxted has been running for a long time, it probably started in the 1920s (Alan has a 1931 timetable). On Thursday 11 December 1969 the route was withdrawn at short notice, partly due to lack of staff. Other Viceroy services were not affected. On Monday 15 December 1969 Eastern National introduced a replacement facility, the 33A between Dunmow and Saffron Walden, worked by Dunmow outstation, then in the Dons Coaches garage in North Street. The number 33A was used since it was contemplated that a link with the 33 (Dunmow - Chelmsford) could be established. On 17 May 1970 this happened when the 33 was extended through to Saffron Walden to provide a through link to Chelmsford. Later, journeys ran both via Debden (33) as well as via Wimbush (33A). At deregulation the service was split, 33 running commercially by Eastern National between Chelmsford and Dunmow, and 313 running under contract to Essex CC between Dunmow and Saffron Walden, ironically operated by Viceroy. The 313 later changed hands several times, being run by County Bus & Coach (Townlink), then Arriva East Herts & Essex and later Four Counties Buses. Other operators may also have been involved. It has been run by Stephensons since September 2013.

Left: Four Counties Buses' Mercedes-Benz 0814D / Plaxton V10 WTL is laying over at Dunmow in 2002. **David Grimmett**



Also further to last month's Viceroy photo, and also the two photos that featured '007' on the blinds, here is a Viceroy bus displaying the same number. The photographer **David Grimmett** writes: "F.C. Moore, Viceroy, of Saffron Walden's DRN 277 (ex-Ribble Leyland bodied Leyland PD2) inside their garage in 1971. In the mid 1960s it regularly worked the Saffron Walden-Newport Grammar School contract where I suspect it gained its 007 route number - there were several young enthusiasts like me at Newport all too eager to play with things we should have left alone! The Clacton destination is interesting, I wonder if it ever had a day at the seaside?"

See also page 16 for some more follow up information on EBM 687.

Wrong Counties

Apologies, we managed to get a couple of counties mixed up last month. On page 22, GDS Travel, Long Sutton, is in Lincolnshire not Cambridgeshire. On page 25, Henstridge is in Somerset not Suffolk. Thanks to Paul Harvey and David Grimmett for the corrections.



In March the Government published a strategy paper with this rather clumsy title, aimed at transforming bus services, making “buses more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, better co-ordinated and cheaper”. All very laudable aims but with a worrying lack of detail on how this transformation can be achieved without a massive injection of public funds and a radical change of tack by many Local Authorities. We don’t have room here to describe the key aspects of the new policy - which only applies in England - but they have been covered in *Buses* magazine and the trade press; Google “bus back better” to read the full Government paper.

A series of key deadlines were set and as the first of these has now passed, it’s worth reflecting on the position locally. Just to recap, the strategy places a heavy onus on Local Authorities (counties and unitaries) to drive through change, initially by opting either to commit to establishing an Enhanced Partnership or by starting the process of franchising bus services. That initial decision had to be made by 30 June, and then by 31 October LAs must publish their initial ‘Bus Service Improvement Plan’, which is then updated regularly. Those timescales were seen as very optimistic, especially for smaller authorities with few staff experienced in public transport matters.

The current position, as advised by the respective authorities, is:

Essex County Council: as a first step, ECC has made a decision to pursue an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators in Essex. There are seven identified areas for proposals: Working in partnership; Customer quality commitment; Better, well used services; Support for valuable, but not commercial, services; Good customer information; Tailored solutions; Ticketing; and Focused local planning. You can read more at <https://www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/bus/bus-strategy>.

Southend Borough Council: have also made a commitment to an Enhanced Partnership and have already had some meetings with bus operators.

Thurrock Council: at the time of writing, Thurrock Council had not replied to a request for information and had not publicised its actions to date.

In neighbouring areas, **Hertfordshire** has had an Enhanced Partnership in place since April 2020 (Intalink) so step one was already satisfied. **Suffolk** has also committed to developing an Enhanced Partnership. In **Greater London**, the strategy doesn’t apply as TfL already control the whole bus network, although this raises some interesting issues for the relationship with neighbouring authorities for cross-boundary services. The relationship between Essex and Southend will also be of interest given that the vast majority of services operating in Southend cross into Essex (only six normal routes are wholly within Southend, 6, 6A, 17, 24, 29, 61). The Essex / Thurrock interface also presents challenges, although there are fewer cross-boundary routes.

If the Government strategy succeeds, we could see a very welcome step change improvement in bus services, but that depends heavily on the ability of Local Authorities to come up with imaginative plans that they can actually deliver, bus lanes being a particularly challenging objective. If LAs can’t or don’t deliver, bus operators face the loss of existing funding like BSOG and Covid recovery funds and no access to new funding sources, and that could result in a radical reduction in services. We certainly live in interesting times.

The aims of the Hertfordshire scheme give some clues to what our local authorities could aspire to:



- Giving buses higher priority on our roads to beat congestion
- Improving facilities for passengers
- Raising and enforcing quality standards
- Enhancing the provision of bus departure information at bus stops and on the Intalink app
- Entrenching the Intalink brand on buses and on all publicity and information
- Widening the range of multi-operator tickets
- Introducing an upgraded Intalink website and mobile app

The remaining Covid 19 restrictions were all lifted from 19 July 2021.

20 July 2021

193 Ardleigh to East Bergholt High School (Sch) **Carters Heritage Services** school service withdrawn.

This service had been transferred from Carters Coach Services to Carters Heritage Buses on 11 April 2016, in advance of Ipswich Buses completing the takeover of Carters Coach Services on 27 May 2016.

Right: Carters Heritage Buses K739 ODL in New Road, Mistley working the 1545 East Bergholt High School - Ardleigh 193 on 13 April 2016. A Leyland Olympian with Northern Counties body new to Southern Vectis in 1993. Acquired by Carters from Go South Coast via Ensignbus in 2015. **Robert Appleton**



22 July

63/A Colchester to West Mersea (M-S) **Go Ahead Hedingham** extra journeys Monday to Friday introduced providing a link to East Mersea for the summer until 31 August.

25 July

7 Cambridge to Saffron Walden (D) **Stagecoach Cambridge** change of bus stopping arrangements in Cambridge City Centre.

21 Basildon to North Benfleet (Sat) **First Essex** contract service withdrawn.

381 Harlow to Coopersale (M-S) **Ugobus** contract service withdrawn.

418 Epping St Margaret's Hospital to Loughton (M-S) **Central Connect** contract service withdrawn. Note no change to 418B evenings and Sunday service.

26 July

381 Harlow to Coopersale (M-S) **Vectare** new contract service replacing **Ugobus**.

418 Epping St Margaret's Hospital to Loughton (M-S) **Stephensons** new contract service replacing **Central Connect**.

SB21 Fuller Street to Braintree St Michaels (Mon) **Arrow Taxis** new service.

31 July

21 Basildon to North Benfleet (M-F) **NIBS** introduction of Saturday contract service replacing **First Essex**.

1 August

75/A Colchester to Maldon Morrisons (D) **First Essex** minor timetable changes.

16 August

60/A Southend to Paglesham (M-S) **Stephensons** temporary revision to timetable and route due to roadworks at Stambridge. Will revert to normal timetable and route on completion of works.

29 August

194 Langham to East Bergholt High School (Sch) **Ipswich Buses** school service renumbered 694.

693 Ardleigh to East Bergholt High School (Sch) **Ipswich Buses** new school service replacing **Carters Heritage Services** 193.

1 September

100 Stow Maries to Burnham on Crouch Ormiston Rivers Academy (Sch) **Fords** new school service

491 Fyfield to Epping St Johns School & 494 High Ongar to Epping St Johns School (Sch) **NIBS** school services withdrawn.

804 Debden to Chigwell West Hatch School (Sch) **Stephensons** new school service.

FC05 Mundon to South Woodham Ferrers (Sch) **Fords** revision to route and timetable.

With thanks to LOTS, Essex, Hertfordshire & Suffolk County Councils, Omnibus Society (Eastern Branch) Robert Appleton & Richard Delahoy.

First Group News

Further to EBN 685, the sale of First Student and First Transit, North American parts of First Group, to EQT Infrastructure, was completed on 21 July 2021. Greyhound is now First Group's only operation outside of the UK and Ireland.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 4 2021/22 (27 June - 24 July)

32477 CR-CR (oos), 32530 BN-BN (oos), 32531 BN-BN (oos), 37134 CR-CR (oos)

Disposal

Further to EBN 686, 33088 has moved on from Ensignbus to Shelton Motors for scrap.

Services

ECC Saturday route 21 was last operated by First Essex on 24 July, from 31st the Saturday service was operated by NIBS Buses who already ran the Monday to Friday service (a mix of commercial and ECC supported). On the last day of FE, 44908 was on the route all day.

This brought to an end duplicate route numbers within First Essex's services after many years, their other route 21 is the daily Southend to Canvey Newlands service. Up until a few years ago, FE operated a third 21 service, in the Braintree area. Amongst other duplicate route numbers that have ceased in the last few years include 100 (Clacton to Walton no longer runs, Chelmsford to Lakeside does) and 73 (which was two services with the same number operating from the same depot, Westway - Chelmsford to Maldon and Brentwood local, both still run but the latter has been renumbered 37).

School Services

The below reports are from 12 to 21 July inclusive. Services ceased for the summer holidays between 16th and 21st.

Colchester

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

17, two-vehicle route: 30564 (12th-16th, 19th-20th), 30567 (12th-16th, 19th-20th). No service after 20th.

67C: 32068 (14th pm), 37006 (16th am), 37015 (13th am), 37035 (13th pm), 37135 (15th pm), 37136 (15th am), 37139 (16th pm), 66804 (12th am), 67736 (14th am), 67741 (12th am), 67805 (19th am). No service after 19th am.

Below: now that school services have finished for the summer, 30564 and 30567 are being used on normal routes instead of their usual school route 17. The latter is seen below on route 62 in Colchester Bus Station on 21 July 2021, the day after the 17 ended for the summer term. The driver is adjusting the seat! **Adam Kelleher**



Chelmsford

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

525: 32641 (12th pm), 36842 (12th am, 13th-15th), 36843 (16th). No service after 16th.

570: 32482 (13th), 32483 (12th, 16th am), 32484 (15th), 32631 (14th pm), 32642 (14th am), 32676 (16th pm). No service after 16th.

620: 32482 (12th, 16th), 32483 (13th, 15th), 32551 (14th am), 32672 (14th am), 66812 (14th am). No service after 16th.

533: 32551 (13th am), 32640 (12th pm), 32672 (13th pm), 36837 (16th), 36838 (13th pm), 36843 (12th am, 14th am, 15th), 67191 (14th pm). No service after 16th.

Basildon

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

561, three-vehicle route: 32249 (12th), 32526 (12th-16th), 32532 (15th, 16th, 20th), 32539 (13th-16th, 19th), 33424 (13th, 21st), 33545 (14th), 33567 (12th). Only one vehicle operated 19th-21st, no service after 21st.

625: 33424 (12th, 14th-16th, 19th am), 33545 (13th), 66813 (21st am). Nothing reported 19th pm or 21st pm or all-day 20th. No service after 21st.

725: 47653 (12th-16th), 47654 (19th am). Nothing reported 19th pm. No service after 19th.

825: 32249 (16th), 32526 (19th am, 21st), 33507 (12th-15th, 20th), 47654 (19th pm). No service after 21st.

Hadleigh

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

820: 33133 (12th-15th, 16th am, 19th, 20th am). Nothing reported 16th pm or 20th pm. No service after 20th.

822: 33095 (12th pm), 33133 (21st am), 33134 (12th am, 15th, 16th, 20th), 33136 (13th, 19th), 33376 (14th), 33384 (21st pm). No service after 21st.

827: 33134 (13th, 19th, 21st), 33136 (12th, 14th-16th, 20th am). Nothing reported 20th pm. No service after 21st.

Other Area News & Workings

Capacity restrictions were completely lifted from Step 4 of 4 out of lockdown on 19 July 2021, with the wearing of face coverings (unless exempt) no longer a legal requirement. However, the company recommended the continued use of masks on new signs on the nearside front window as seen right, these replace the signs illustrated on page 13 of EBN 686.



Colchester

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

63332 caught fire whilst on the 0559 service 71 from Colchester to Chelmsford on 26 July, having just turned off the A12 to Witham. It was later seen on tow on the A12 past Marks Tey at 0945. The fire was in the engine bay and it caused significant interior damage.

News of the Harwich routes (5 July-3 August). One Volvo B7TL / Alexander ALX400 (32068), 18 Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Geminis, one Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini (37133), nine Wrightbus StreetLites, nine Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipses and all 12 Alexander Dennis Enviro 300s worked on the 102/103/104 in this period. This period has seen a reduction in double-deckers. On several days the only double-decker was on 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103, so Harwich was served entirely by single-deckers. The Saturday allocation was entirely single-deck, for example on 17 July 63343, 66810, 67779, one of each single-deck type allocated to CR. The Sunday 102 allocation was double-deck on 11 July with 37034, 37035, 37054, but after that it became single-deck.

On the Clacton routes:

74B: 32068 (15th), 32547 (22nd), 32628 (13th), 37004 (24th), 37005 (14th), 37006 (12th), 37007 (26th), 37010 (16th), 37017 (19th), 37020 (4 & 5 August), 37034 (29th), 37035 (17th), 37036 (2 August), 37042 (20th, 23rd, 31st, 2 August), 37054 (27th, 30th), 37062 (28th), 37133 (7 August), 37136 (6 August).

76: 32673 (18th), 37037 (25th), 67736 (1 August), 67739 (8 August)

Colchester allocated single-deckers on route 70: 63344 (29th), 66801 (19th, 4 August), 66803 (12th, 16th), 66810 (15th, 27th), 66816 (14th, 20th, 29th), 66828 (2 August), 66970 (27th), 66971 (23rd, 26th, 27th, 30th, 7 August), 67735 (12th, 16th), 67736 (28th), 67737 (30th), 67738 (22nd), 67739 (5 & 6 August), 67741 (19th, 2 August), 67750 (17th, 23rd, 24th), 67755 (15th, 19th), 67756 (21st, 2 August), 67805 (14th). One or two Colchester single-deckers a day are common on the 70, alongside much more usual double-deckers, so these will no longer be reported after this month. Most of these workings are in the evening only after working on other routes (usually 71) during the day. Occasionally a single-decker will work on the 70 all day but this is not usual. 66804 on driver shuttles (21st).

Chelmsford

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CF. All dates July 2021.)
Further to EBNs 677 & 678, the super rear advert for 'Essex and Suffolk Water' on 44537 which was applied last September, has been removed. It is not known when, it still had it at the end of December last year, so any time since then.

First Bus's Engineering Training bus, 32052 (X578 RJW), a Volvo B7TL / East Lancs Vyking, new as a service bus to First London, has been back at Westway (Chelmsford depot), seen there on 6 June and, right, 8 July. **David Edwards.** 32052 was previously reported at Westway in February 2014 in EBN 599.

The Park & Ride Enviro 200 MMCs continue to work on other routes as well as P&R, principally the 31 group of routes plus also the 42 group. Much more unusual were 67191 on S33 on afternoon of 14th (as reported above) and the same bus on 40 on 31st and 67192 on 71C/X, 70, 31D & 42 on 8 August, these vehicles are not usually in service on Sundays. Other unusual / interesting workings: 32551 (15th), 67164 (13th) & 67171 (8 August) on X30. 66796 a long vehicle on 73 (21st). 66730 (26th) & 66872 (22nd, 27th) long vehicles on 37. 44915 (27th) & 44599 (16th) on driver shuttles.

New signage has recently been introduced at Chelmsford Bus Station to remind drivers of double-deckers to turn left to avoid the low bridge in Duke Street. 67163 on route X10 to Stansted Airport is seen right departing the Bus Station on 6 August 2021. **Adam Kelleher.** Incidentally, X10s to & from Basildon seem to have reverted to their previous route of going under Duke Street bridge rather than taking the diversion via Coval Lane that double-deckers on route X30 need to take to & from Southend.

Basildon & Hadleigh

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

69908 has had the part of its super rear advert for route 100 that covered the window removed, as seen right at Chelmsford Bus Station on 16 July 2021. **Adam Kelleher**

Route 9 continued on Mondays-Fridays with normally four double-deckers (usually Enviro 400s) and one StreetLite. Other types of double-decker: 32249 (27th, 28th), 32260 (14th, 28th), 32532 (26th, 31st, 6 August), 32539 (20th), 32540 (19th, 28th), 33186 (20th). During the summer holidays more StreetLites have been used on various days, but double-deckers continue to dominate. On Saturdays, there are less double-deckers, one or two at the most, and more single-deckers, for example, on 24th, five StreetLites plus mini-Enviro 200 44908 and no double-deckers.

Following more mini-Enviro 200s being seen on routes 94/A during June and early July (EBM 687), since then one of the batch 44908-10 has been on the route most days alongside a StreetLite. On a few occasions the routes were operated by two StreetLites. On Saturday 10th 33574 was on the first rounder of 94, then replaced by 33573 on the 0857 ex Basildon. Apart from this the only other double-decker noted was 33546 on 27th.

Other unusual / interesting workings: non-Enviro 200 MMCs on X10: 47650 (8 August), 47655 (27th), 69909 (27th), 69910 (12th). 33555 a double-decker on 16 on 17th. 33568 on 100 (26th). 44908 (25th & 8 August) and 44910 (1 August) on 251. HH69516 (14th) and HH69518 (23rd) on evening 27. HH69518 on 27 (Sunday 1 August). HH37985 unusually brought Westcliff livery to Basildon on 5 August, on route 25.

Please see bottom of page 21 for acknowledgments.



Vehicle Back in Fleet

514 LB02 YXF Mechanical issues repaired - working from HD by 8 July 2021.

Withdrawn Vehicle

574 W506 WGH Withdrawn due to serious gearbox failure - unlikely to be repaired but to be confirmed.

Significant Allocations

910 CN - KN by 28 July

911 CN - KN by 29 July

Fleet News

804, YN55 PZF, was loaned to Konectbus for a University of East Anglia event on 3 & 4 July. Happily, 616, SN10 CCV, the accident damaged anniversary celebrating Enviro 400 was returned to work by 19 July, fully repaired after its unfortunate collision, returning to work from HD depot. The report provided of 568, W458 WGH, leaving CN for scrap was premature, with 568 still being on site but in a cannibalised state during July. An additional correction is that the first ex London Enviro 400 to go to Hants & Dorset Trim for refurbishment is EN22, LK08 FLN, with LK56 EUC still at CN late July. 875, PN09 ENE, is reported to be VOR due to an accident sustained circa 13 July. 298, OU57 FHA, has been VOR at CN since 14 July due to engine failure.

Service News

From 22 July three round trips on service 63/A were extended to & from East Mersea on Mondays - Fridays (excluding Bank Holiday) until 31 August. The chosen trips do not serve West Mersea and at Colchester do not serve further than Head Street. Two of the journeys are direct, not serving Berechurch or Peldon, but the 1644 ex Colchester and 1741 ex East Mersea serve all stops.

Dedicated school services 901- 904, 16A, 19 and 95A all ceased until the September school restarts.

Other News

9005, Vauxhall Corsa van GV7 LUD, and 9008, Renault Traffic minibus LX09 YET, are withdrawn at CN.

Photos - Chambers Vehicles operating with Hedingham

Top: Chambers 871, PN09 ELU a Scania / Optare, on one-day only loan to Hedingham on 14 July 2021 at Thomas Laud Audley School, Monkwick, Colchester. 586 is behind. **John Podgorski**

Bottom: Chambers 811, YN55 PZP a Scania / East Lincs, on route 137 from Pier Avenue on 11 June during its extended stay at Clacton depot. **Mark Lloyd**



With thanks to John Podgorski & the Hedingham website.

Southend

As noted last month, Colchester's 4073 (in black Park & Ride livery) was loaned to Southend from 8 July 2021 to help with a vehicle shortage but was returned to Colchester on 17 July.

A particularly unusual working on 14 July saw Enviro 400 6505 operate on service 9, Eastwood Rise to Rayleigh Station and Rayleigh to Southend Victoria Station, filling in for a gap in service. Double-deckers are normally banned from the 9 because of particularly low trees at the western end of Green Lane in Eastwood, and hence 6505 operated via Rayleigh Road and White House Road instead, missing out Western Approaches. **Matthew Evans's** photo, right, shows the bus in White House Road where bus stops are still in place although there has not been a service on this road since April 2005 when Southend Borough Council withdrew all support for bus services.



External Hires

School duplication continued to Friday 16 July as previously reported; most schools broke up then but the actual last day of term was the following Wednesday, 21 July. On Monday 19th some duplicates were still running, e.g., five were noted in Southend in the afternoon; on 21st of the six departures expected from Rayleigh Station, only one ran (and carried no-one). Arriva themselves ran their school day schedules for the whole of the week commencing 19 July, presumably on the basis that it is too difficult to amend schedules and rotas in the middle of the week.

Further vehicles noted have been:

Travellers Choice: 6 SVK (ex ??) and 9 HDX (ex P015 KTF), both Volvo B13RT / Jonckheere and P016 LZN, Volvo B11RT / Jonckheere. The total number of hired vehicles now observed since last September stands at 74. This may now be the end of such duplication, but we will have to wait to see what rules are in force for capacity limits on buses when the new school year starts in September. Meanwhile, a short summary of these quite extraordinary operations appears on the next page.

Colchester

Plans to replace the Park & Ride fleet (4071-5), following a new tender award, are under way. 4071 left Colchester on 13 June and is understood to be due for a repaint and transfer elsewhere within Arriva. Replacements are expected to be 2017 MMC model ADL Enviro 200s from Arriva in Kent, rumoured to be 4120-5, SN67 WUJ/K/L/M/O/P, from Gillingham. The short-term loan of 4073 to Southend is noted under that heading. Meanwhile, P&R buses have continued to be used on service 77 on many occasions.

Short Dart / Caetano 1564, HX04 HUH, had only been in use for staff shuttles since the start of the pandemic, but it has now been fitted with a driver screen and it returned to public service on the afternoon of 23 July.

On 2 August a Wright StreetLite DF, 4334, SK68 TXF, was collected on loan from Northfleet depot; it is in Sapphire livery.

Services have been seriously disrupted in the town centre recently, on 27 July (High Street closed due to an incident) and again two days later (Head Street closed due to an unsafe building). These affected all Colchester operators' services, unplanned closures of those two streets in the town centre cause massive disruption as they are fundamental to all bus operations through Colchester.

Thanks to Matthew Evans, Keith Sadler and Tim Webb.

Arriva School Duplicates - in Retrospect by Richard Delahoy

Since last September we've reported on the astonishing volume and variety of school duplicates being operated by various operators on behalf of Arriva Southend, funded through the Department of Education to provide additional capacity whilst social distancing rules applied on service buses. Now that the school year has ended, it's worth reflecting briefly on the scale of the operations. Every route that operates on weekdays has had at least one duplicate but the predominant use has been on the 7/8 group, and to a lesser extent on the 1, which serve a whole series of secondary schools between Shoebury and Rayleigh. Duplicates ran from September to December, then there was the complete school closure until March (except that some duplicates ran for one day in January); operation resumed on 8 March through to the end of term in July.

The following table summarises the operations:

Operator	Max. number of vehicles per day	Total number of different vehicles observed	Periods of operation
Grange Travel, Gravesend	5	17	Whole year except June
M & M Staffing, Chelmsford	3	6	Whole year
Klarners, Colchester on hire to M&M	(1)	4	Mid November to mid-June
Peter Godward Coaches, Basildon	3	10	Few days in Sept. then from Nov. onwards
The Travellers Choice, Carnforth	6	24	April onwards
Vectare, Chelmsford	3	10	Whole year
Westbus, Hayes	1	2	From September to December
White Lion Coaches, Addlestone	1	1	One week only, March
Total number of vehicles observed		74	

It's likely that we did not spot every vehicle used, so the grand total may be more than 74. Arriva also provided some duplicates with their own vehicles from September through to Easter 2021. In addition, the normally scheduled school day extra double-deck operated journeys on 7 & 29 continued to the pre-Covid timetable. (A photo of route 7 is on the inside rear cover.)

I have compiled more detailed notes, and these are available as a pdf document for anyone interested, just e-mail me (or send a C5 size SAE) - contact details on page 2 as usual.

Below: M&M Staffing of Cooksmill Green, near Chelmsford, have been a consistent performer on the school duplicates and are one of only two operators to use a double decker bus (Peter Godward is the other). Their ex-Blackpool Trident / East Lancs PN04 XDK carries this attractive livery and was seen at Bournes Green on an afternoon working to Rayleigh on 21 April. Strictly the route number should be prefixed by an "S" to denote that the bus is only available for school / college pupils, but full marks for programming the blinds!



Fleet

Dart 457 (NK55 KBU) at NIBS has been withdrawn (it was judged not worth an engine transplant on grounds of condition).

Operations

On the borders of Essex, Galloway Travel Group is growing its National Express operation as the network rebuilds, and as well as recommencing the 250/251/482 Ipswich - Stansted - Heathrow - London service group (which will get additional journeys later in August), Galloway will also gradually take over operation of 075 Cambridge - London which will equate to three diagrams by the end of September. This will most likely entail the addition of a ninth NX coach to the eight already operated (three of which have been working for Lucketts in Fareham over the summer but are scheduled to return).

Services

Slightly out of our area, in Bury St Edmunds town service Breeze 2 is withdrawn from 30 August. At Stephenson's and NIBS, some school services are changing for the new school year as reported in 'Service Revisions'.

Below: Optare Solo 330 (MX59 AWF) was illustrated in last August's EBN (676) in Galloway livery with NIBS fleet name on the front, but here it is with its original owner Hatch Green Coaches at Highbridge Railway Station, Somerset on 27 May 2015. **Robert Downton**





As reported in EBN 684, Stephenson's local Brentwood route 71C was withdrawn at the end of April 2021 with the ending of developer funding. The regular vehicle used on the route was Mercedes Sprinter City 45, fleet number 301. And as reported last month, from the start of term in September, 301 is expected to be used on newly gained ECC route 804, Debden to Chigwell, schooldays. But in the meantime, it has been in use at Braintree, as seen here on route 9 on 16 July. **David Moth**



As also reported last month, Stephenson's gained ECC route 418 from Central Connect from 26 July 2021, and as predicted, Mellor Strata bodied Mercedes Sprinter 302 is being used on it.

On the opposite page, it is seen in service at Theydon Bois on 31 July and left, on the same day, on layover at St Margaret's Hospital Epping.

Both: **Stephenson's of Essex**, photos by **Richard Frakes**

With thanks to the Companies.

Acquired Vehicles

YJ05 XJB Volvo B12B / Van Hool C49FT from Coach Hire Surrey.

LJ58 AUX Alexander Dennis Enviro 200 ex Arriva purchased from Ensignbus for spares.

YN55 WSV Volvo B12B / Plaxton Panther ex Go Ahead London purchased from Ensignbus for spares May 2012, as reported in Ensignbus Dealer Stock Movements in EBM 687.

Fleet News

Enviro 200 YX10 BFO has been painted plain white for resale.

Further to EBNs 684 & 685, PSVAR compliant Volvo B12B Plaxton Panther, VB08 PAN (ex SV08 GXP) has now entered service and is painted plain white with Panther Travel fleet names.

Below: Scania K360 / Plaxton AB61PAN (ex OX61 OXF) working on behalf of Megabus for the British Grand Prix on GP13 to Ipswich on 14 July 2021. **Adam Barham**



Follow Up Information

Some follow up information to last month's EBM, kindly supplied by **Nigel Turner**.

As Gary Sharpe mentioned on page 30, the ex-Doncaster AEC Reliances came to Osborne's from Silver Service of Darley Dale but he wasn't sure about intermediate owners. In fact, 8625 DT went direct from Doncaster to Silver Service in 1970 and ran on their Bakewell service for three years before coming to Tollesbury. However, 8629 DT spent a couple of years with Golden Miller of Feltham before moving to Darley Dale in January 1972. In retrospect, 12 years (1961-1973) does seem a very short service life for Reliances.

Regarding the photo of Stephenson's 449 on service 105 (Colchester- Walton) and the earlier photo of Eastern National 3428 on the same service in EBN 685, I think 105 may be the oldest Eastern National service number still in current use. It came into use in early 1931 when Eastern National acquired Silver Queen and added 100 to their service 5. Although the routing has altered over the years, and there have been changes of operator, the termini towns are still the same.

Services

From 19 July 2021, for the summer holidays, school route S13 was replaced by a normal 13, running at slightly later times.

Vectare took over ECC service 381, Coopersale-Harlow M-S, from Ugobus on 26 July. The service operated free of charge for the first week. On the first morning of operation Mercedes-Benz Sprinter / EVM 205, RE70 EZU, approaches Epping via the back road from Harlow via Epping Green on its way to Coopersale. **Owen Woodliffe**



Above left: Last month we included a photo of a white Mercedes-Benz Sprinter / Ilesbus, CN21 XJH, working on route 61, Brentwood to Blackmore, on 9 July 2021, in Brentwood High Street. Photographer **Chris Stewart** also took a shot of its unusual rear at the same time. It was thought to be a demonstrator, Chris hasn't seen it since and it hasn't appeared on Bustimes since either.

Above right: on 21 June 2021 Vectare increased their Saturday only service 22 from Waltham Cross to Waltham Abbey (Skilllets Hill Farm) to the Monday to Friday level of operation, although four return journeys terminate at Shernbrook Road. This route is over the most used section of Arriva's 66 service, although no passengers were aboard Mercedes-Benz Sprinter / EVM 200, WN69 FYL, at 1300 on 14 July as it passes the Gunpowder Mills Site at Waltham Abbey.

Owen Woodliffe.



Ensignbus

omnibus suppliers to the world

by Mark Lloyd

Dealer Stock Movements July 2021

Vehicles In

From **Avondale, Glasgow**: Enviro 200s LJ58 DWC/O

From **First Cymru**: Solo YJ60 LRN

From **First South West**: Volvo B7TLs WU02 KVF, W732-5 DWX, YJ51 RCU, W814-5 PAE, KP51 VZT/W/WAO/U/WBT/WCX, WR03 YZM/T/U

From **Go Ahead North-East**: Scania GX03 SSU/SUA/H/U/V/SVF/G/J, YN04 GJG

From **Stagecoach South**: Tridents SK52 USP, MX55 KSK, KX06 LYU. Volvo B7TL SP05 FKH.

Vehicles Out

Volvo B7TL PG04 WHT/V: **A2B Travel, Newquay**

Volvo B9TL BV13 ZCZ, BF63 HEJ, BF62 UYP, BF62 UYN, KE12 OEY: **Atlantic, Manchester**. KE12 OEY is a re-registration of WB12 POT which was recorded in EBM 687 as an acquisition from Golden Tours in May. Golden Tours have retained the registration to go on their new Harry Potter bus.

Dennis Dart SN06 BPE/Y: **Avondale, Glasgow**

Volvo B7TL W732 DWX, W814 PAE: **Buntings Travel, Norfolk**

Enviro 400 SN11 BPU/V/X: **Chalkwell, Sittingbourne**

Volvo Ayatts LX05 GDZ: **Discover Dorset**

Enviro 200 LJ57 USU, Optare Solo KX7 KGA: **Galleon Travel, Roydon, Essex** - see page 21

DAF DB20 LJ51 DKF/V/DJZ: **Go North East**

Volvo B9TL SN08 BXP/BXY: **Heyfordian Travel, Oxford**

Volvo B7RLE SK07 CGE: **Lawsons, Corby**

Scania GX03 SSU/SUA/H/V/SVF/G/J, YN04 GJG: **Redfern Travel, Mansfield**

Volvo B9TL SN08 BXG/H/L/BWY: **Rodgers, Corby**

Enviro 200 LJ09 KPK: **Stantons of Stoke**

DAF DB20 KL52 CXI: **Mr D Turunctur, Harrow**

Volvo B9TL SN08 BYB/BXR: **Transdev**

Volvo B9TL BN61 MCX/F: **Tyrsers, Manchester**

Scania YT59 PBU: **XLP Ltd, London**

Volvo B9TL SK07 CBX: **York Pullman**

To Shelton Motors for scrap

Solo YJ13 HJY

Tridents LN51 GMU/GKY, SN51 SYR, SK52 USP, KX06 LYU. LN51 GMU is ex-First Essex 33088 - see page 8.

Versa YJ60 KGF

Ensignbus Fleet

Acquired is 368, 68 EB, a 12m long former Transbus Enviro 500 test bed vehicle. It is illustrated on the front cover. Chassis number is SFD135GR41GTD1360. It is thought to have been built in 2001 as a development vehicle ahead of Hong Kong orders for this type; the HK ones were built from 2003 onwards, and the chassis number of 368 is earlier than those. The body number also supports it being new in 2001. It was built as an air-conditioned dual-door bus to Kowloon Motor Bus specification but was never finished and had never previously been used or registered having been retained by Transbus and successor Alexander Dennis as a development vehicle. It remained in the UK and was acquired by Ensignbus in late 2020.

It has been converted by Ensignbus to open-top and single door. It has had seats fitted from ex First vehicles, including at least one ex First Essex Hadleigh Trident / President. These remain in First purple but new, red plastic, seat cushions have been fitted. Marden Commercial of Benfleet completed the paintwork, decals and adverts. It was first registered on 1 July, with '68 EB' being most apt for use on Ensignbus seafront service 68. The fleet number 368 matches the registration number and immediately precedes the Volvo B7L / Ayats Bravos 369-371. It entered service on 26 July on the 1000 departure of service 68, carrying fare paying passengers for the first time since being built. Seating capacity is O53/29F, 53 seats up top make it ideal for the seafront service.

Also acquired, in April 2021, is RATP London United StreetDeck HEV96 WH45252, SK18 TKY, H41/22D, new to them as a demonstrator in July 2018. It has been given fleet number EBS1972 to reflect the year Ensignbus was founded. It has been retained in TfL livery for filming purposes. It has an 'Ensign' name under the side advert frames to mimic the 'Global' advertising name on TfL buses. It has the depot code 'PT', for Purfleet, and the running number 950. It has been fitted with LED blinds so that it can be programmed to any route required by film makers. It was photographed by **Andrew Colebourne** at Woodford Wells on TfL school route 679 extra on 27 May 2021. Andrew also saw it on the 679 on 19 May but doesn't know how often it was used on the route. The bus behind is 136, BJ11 DVV.



Andrew Colebourne also writes: "I was surprised to see Ensignbus's ex Go-Ahead London (original design) StreetDeck SN64 CTV still on loan to HCT Group on Thursday 22 July. I've not been able to figure out the time of the working it was doing on route 20 because it evidently had no working iBus equipment so was not showing on London Vehicle Finder. I hadn't seen it since 27 April. I presume it would display the route number in the windscreen when in service. The last day of the summer term Friday 23rd in Greater London (some schools had already finished) was interesting because TfL route 679 buses didn't run but the two Ensignbus reliefs did; they were 901, SN11 BTU, and 902, SN11 BPY". Right: SN64 CTV at Woodford Green on 22 July.

Andrew Colebourne



Ipswich Buses have four 8.9m long ADL Enviro 200s, 71/72 (LX58 LMO/LMM) & 70/73 (YX59 BZL/BZN) which spend a lot of their time on Essex services 2/A, 4/11, but other buses do work on these services. Colchester routes 4/11 have also seen 10.8m long Enviro 200s. On the afternoon of 12 July 108 (YX66 WCM) which has 'Whitehouse's Own' route branding for Ipswich town service 8 was used. Also spotted have been 74 (DU60 LOI), 75 (GD10 MVM), 76 (GD10 MVM), 82 (YX63 LGF), 84 (MX09 HHS) and 101 (SN16 OGG). Not to be outdone, Clacton - Mistley 2/A was worked by Optare Solo 245 (YJ05 XNY) on 6 July. 10.8m long ADL Enviro 200s have also worked this service, including 82, 84, and 101.

On 27 July 2020 Ipswich Buses started working Essex CC contracted services 2/A, 4 & 11 using three Optare Versas, see photos on rear cover of EBN 676, August 2020. One year on and three Enviro 200 were used on 27 July 2021: 82 on 2/A, 73 and 75 on 4 & 11. The photo right is of 8.9m long 73 leaving Highwoods on route 11 on 27 July. This was new to Mid Wales Motors and it carries a Welsh name 'Gwenhwyfar' and the Welsh flag on the front dash panel below the fleet name.

During the morning of 14 July, a lorry hit the barriers at Manningtree level crossing. The level crossing was out of use for the rest of the day, causing long queues of lorries and high vehicles



on both sides of the level crossing. Thus Ipswich Buses had to terminate service 92, Ipswich - Manningtree, at Cattawade. The level crossing was back in use the next day. From 26 July, the Scania OmniCity usually working on service 92 was replaced by an 8.9m long Enviro 200. 72 was used on 26/27/29/30 July, and sister 71 on 28th. This was due to the B1080 road from Stutton to Brantham (Bull) being closed due to BT Openreach roadworks. The diversionary route used Stutton Lane, a very narrow and twisty road with low trees, thus needing the use of small single-deckers. This road closure continued to 6 August.

With most Suffolk school summer holidays starting on 20/21 July, 56 (PN52 XBK) DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlander, was not required on school contract work, so it was used on service 93 on 21 July, starting with 0950 Ipswich - Colchester 93. However, by 26 July the older double-deckers were stood down from service for the school summer holidays, these were:

54 (PF04 WML) VDL DB250 / East Lancs Lowlander, 55/56/57 (PN52 XBO/K/J), 58/59 (PJ53 OLA/B) DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlanders, 61/62 (PJ54 YZU/V), 63 (YN06 TFZ) Scania N94UB / East Lancs Omnidiekkas.

By the end of July both 61 and 62 were at Hants & Dorset Trim at Eastleigh for refurbishment. Thus they will lose their distinctive livery as shown by the photo of 61 on page 24 of EBM 687. Refurbished sister 60 (PJ54 YZT) remained available for service. Therefore Scania OmniCities took over most duties on Ipswich - Colchester 93/A for the rest of July.

160 has been repainted into the green / purple livery, so both former Lothian Buses Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipses, 160/161 (SN57 DCX/DDF), now wear the current livery.

Over the weekend of 24/25 July Mercedes Citaros 153/155 (BF65 HVT/HVV) travelled through Essex on the A12 and M25 to Watford, to act as stand-by buses for the TfL Underground Metropolitan line while part of that line was closed for engineering work.

On 31 July Ipswich Buses was one of the operators of a park & ride service from the Sandon Park & Ride site at Chelmsford to the Maldon Promenade Park Fantasia, Scania OmniCities 46/47 (SGZ 3346/7) were used.

With thanks to Adam Kelleher, John Podgorski, Ipswich Buses website, Ipswich Buses Enthusiast Facebook Group, Ipswich Buses Photography Facebook Group, Ipswich Transport Society Journals, Bustimes

Acquired Vehicles

KX57 KGA Optare Solo M880 B27F, new to Stagecoach Midland Red South 47508 11/07
From Stagecoach Midlands, via Ensignbus

LJ57 USU Alexander Dennis Enviro 200 B26F, new to Arriva London North EN3 01/08
From Arriva London, via Ensignbus. Seen on route 7 on 14 July 2021, blinds turned to white blank and route number in windscreen, still in old Arriva London red livery with yellow pinstripe.

Right: As reported in EBN 685, LJ58 AVE has been acquired from Arriva London, via Ensignbus. It is seen on driver shuttles at Hertford Bus Station on 21 July 2021 still in TfL overall red. **Allan White**

With thanks to Owen Woodliffe and Bus Lists on the Web.



Other Operators

by Roger A Smith

Barker, Roydon

TUI 5718 (ex FJ04 ETK), a Volvo B12 with Jonkheere C57FT body, has gone from here, as has CC02 CRC, a Dennis Javelin with C46FL body by Marco Polo.

Fourways, Highwood

Dennis Trident V479 KJN, with Alexander H47/29F body, is here from Massiah, Shepperton, Surrey.

Keane Travel, Orsett

KIG 1262, a Neoplan N316SHD, reverted to its original registration of YN04 AUX and is now no longer here.

Phillips, South Woodham Ferrers

Change of address to 11, Larkwood Walk, Wickford, SS12 9BY, whilst the operating centre moved to Main Road, Bicknacre, CM3 4HW. However, since then they have surrendered their operator's licence.

Suffolk Travel, Great Tey

Scania CN94 UB (B42F), registration UK54 DRM (ex 5147 UA, UK54 DRM, YN54 OBA) is reported as arriving here from Harrogate Coach, Tockwith, North Yorkshire in February this year.

Swift Travel, North Weald

SP06 AEC, a Bova Futura C49FT, is here from Bonnyrigg, Midlothian operator Charlotte Travel. Neoplan C53F WH08 OXO (ex PJ12 ATN) is here from Reading & Wokingham Buses, Wokingham. Also reported as being here is V24 ROM, a Bova Futura C53FT, formerly with Roman Coaches, Colchester. This vehicle was new to Kings Coaches, Stanway and registered as KC08 ABC. Swift Travel now have an additional operating centre at 8, Grange Way, Colchester, CO2 8HG.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy and the PSV Circle.

Due to lack of space on page 10, acknowledgments for the First Essex report follow.

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Stephen Barham, Jon Collins, David Edwards, John Podgorski, Chris Stewart, Robert West, First Essex, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

Letters

Terry Challis from Blackpool

Further Points re EBN 686

Thank you for EBN 686 and especially the article about Wood Green Garage. I was interested to see the photo of 80 TVX (1571) the very first ENOC Bristol FLF. I believe that this was the only ENOC FLF with a four-speed gearbox.

I was a seasonal driver at Clacton in 1968 and by then 80 TVX was allocated to Clacton garage. It was the first bus that I drove in service. It was the regular performer on Service 110 (Holland to Jaywick via Clacton Railway Station and Clacton Bus Station). At the time this was probably the busiest of the Clacton town services.

With regard to Alan Tebbit's letter about his visit to Canvey as a boy, I lived in Hadleigh from 1940 to 1957. Occasionally my brothers and I would make an afternoon visit to Canvey, it was quite an adventure! Like Alan we had to walk from Benfleet War Memorial down the hill and across the level crossing to the Canvey and District Bus stand which was next to the bridge which led to the island. I always assumed that when it was necessary for Canvey and District buses (and later Westcliff and ENOC buses) to come off the island for maintenance they went across the level crossing and up the hill to Benfleet War Memorial. It would have been quite possible for a double-decker bus to do so but it would not have been possible to run a regular service along this route. The service on Canvey was quite frequent. It should also be remembered that there were no overhead electric lines on the L.T.S. Railway line at that time.

Editor's Note: many thanks to Terry for his interesting letter and his response to Tebzy's request for information. One comment, it was 81 TVX that was allocated to Clacton when Terry was working there in 1968, 80 TVX was at the time allocated to Brentwood.

As for four-speed gearboxes, that is a can of worms. Brian Barrett, who was a conductor on the 251 in 1964 and who became a driver at Southend in 1966, believes that all 20 of the first batch, 80-99 TVX, 1571-1590, later 2700-2719, delivered between November 1960 and January 1961, had four-speed gearboxes, but other people contradict this. Roy Finch, like Terry a driver at Clacton, thinks only the first two had, and this is backed up by Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit who says "80/1 TVX were the only ones that I can recall as having four-speed boxes, certainly the other TVXs that we had at Chelmsford had five gears". There is of course the possibility that the last 18 were originally four-speed but at some stage of their lives were converted to five-speed, but this is something we may never know. The only thing that seems certain is that the first two definitely did have four-speed boxes. As for FLFs after the first batch of 20, the rest of the manual gearbox buses, 2720-2883, were all five-speed. There is an interesting thread on this subject, started by Roy on 24 February this year, on the 'Eastern National Remembered' Facebook group,

Below: 2701, 81 TVX, with CN depot plates, on route 153 at Chelmsford Bus Station.

R. L. Wilson / Online Transport Archive. www.onlinetransportarchive.org. The archive also has a Facebook page.



Summer Special: Open Toppers. Part 1: Historical - KSWs

This is not a history of the Eastern National KSW open toppers, that has been written before, but a series of short articles / features, some of which follow up on items in previous issues of the magazine. Chris Stewart's article 'WNO 484 - the Welsh Exile from Essex' appeared in EBN 679. An update appeared in EBN 681, alongside some more news on WNO 481 which became the 'Wings' tour bus and ended up in Tenerife but is now safely back in the UK. We mentioned then that we had been sent some additional photos of WNO 481 which would be included in a future issue of EBN. Since then, we have also received some other, more unusual, photos of the KSWs. These are now compiled into this Summer Special feature.

Note: these KSWs were numbered in chassis number order not registration number order. To make what follows clearer, WNO 474-5, 478-485 were numbered 2378-80, 83-85, 81-82, 86-87 in the August 1964 scheme. WNO 472-3, 476-7 were 2374-7 and were not converted to open top.

1. WNO 481

As reported in EBN 681, this was sold to Eastern Counties in January 1968 and, after being sold to Halls coaches and then being used on the 'Wings over Europe' tour, was owned by Tricentral between c1974 and 1989. But above right photo shows it when it was still with Eastern National and still had its roof and its 1954-1964 fleet number, 1428. It is at Southend Victoria Station on route 2 to Grays. **D Clark collection** with thanks to **Graham Jones**.

In November 1966 WNO 481 was allocated to Colchester to be hired to the Co-Op as 'Santa's Toy Town Special' in the run-up to Christmas, for which it received a temporary top cover in the shape of a house. It retained its CN depot plate (unusual in cream). It was not operated for as long as had been planned due to adverse weather conditions. **Geoff Mills**

Right: WNO 481 with Eastern Counties as LKO 238 on route 248 at Felixstowe on 7 July 1968.

Gerry Mead, also with thanks to **Graham Jones**.



Right: a downstairs interior shot when WNO 481 was with Tricentral, at the 20th British Coach Rally at Brighton on 21 April 1974 (the same month that Abba won the Eurovision song contest there). There is nothing to show that it had been a lowbridge bus with a sunken offside gangway intruding from the upper deck other than the two-thirds length ventilator panel at the top of the bulkhead and the fact that there are no advert frames in the cove panels on the offside. It is not known where the seats came from, presumably they were retrofitted after the Wings tour. The original conversions used seats from the Leylands they replaced (see photo on page 31).

Allan Macfarlane



Richard Delahoy writes:

Tricentral in the 1970s was a major coach operator through a number of subsidiary companies and the group was at one time considered to be the second-largest coach operator, behind Wallace Arnold, as well as being involved in vehicle sales and conversions. WNO 481 is by far the most widely travelled of the ten Eastern National Bristol KSWs converted to open top, but one of its lesser-known overseas outings was to the Tulip Rally held in Holland in March 1980. The rally was the brainchild of Mike Kay, then of Grey-Green Coaches, and involved a three-day tour for 31 buses and coaches from the UK along with around 400 enthusiasts and their families. As well as the rally itself, we enjoyed canal and tram tours in Amsterdam and visits to a clog factory and a cheese maker.

Starting with the ferry from Sheerness to Vlissingen, we drove 125 miles across Holland and stayed at an IBIS hotel in Amsterdam before setting off for the rally run to the lakeside town of Volendam on the shore of the Markermeer, about 10 miles north-east of Amsterdam. 2385 made an interesting contrast with the other double deckers taking part - an ex-Barton Leyland PS1 rebody, two RTs, two RLHs and Ensignbus DMS1414, then a demonstration vehicle for their sales of these unloved LT buses; I travelled on the DMS. A welcome local entrant from Holland was a Bristol LD of Kleyn Trucks, later identified as ex Hants & Dorset SRU 998.

Sadly, the rally day itself was cold and windy (it was 29 March after all!) and didn't attract as many local visitors as hoped for. I'm currently talking to Mike Kay about putting together a talk for the Friends of the London Transport Museum to rekindle memories of a fascinating trip, far more adventurous than most bus rallies! Below: WNO 481 in the parade through Volendam to the rally site on the lake side, followed by two ex-London RLHs and DMS1414. **Richard Delahoy**



Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit has written in:

I have recently been looking at old copies of EBN, as I have been asked to write an article, and I wanted to make sure that I didn't repeat anything from previous scribes. In EBN 645 (January 2018) I came across a colour picture (repeated in black and white in EBN 668, December 2019) of WNO 481, the Eastern National open top KSW that became Paul McCartney's 'Wings over Europe' bus. The photo, by Lawrence Murphy, shows the bus in ENOC days, and the caption claims that it is on a Private Hire to the Epsom Derby. Far be it for me to question this, but my suspicions were raised by the lack of revellers on the bus. In my experience, hires to the Derby were accompanied by persons in various degrees of inebriation, and dress (or undress), cavorting on the top deck. Closer inspection of the photo revealed a large cardboard box on one of the nearside seats, and evidence of other packages surrounding it. There is a sign in the bulkhead window, red letters on a white ground, which I believe reads 'Royal Mail' (my magnifying glass proved inadequate) and a small label in the windscreen, which I would suggest is the temporary Goods Vehicle 'B' license, required to carry goods commercially. It is not flaming June, but deepest winter, the bus being hired to the Post Office, for delivery of parcels, house to house, in the pre-Christmas rush. I remember the company hiring coaches for this task, but never heard of an open topper being thus employed.

Richard Delahoy has replied:

I had based the caption on what Lawrence Murphy had told us but agree with Alan's analysis. The original photo I have is also not very sharp but yes, the sign does say 'Royal Mail', I should have spotted that at the time. I've looked at the monthly allocation lists and although some buses were noted as hired to the GPO (as per my article in EBN 656), all were saloons or coaches. 2385 was relicensed in November 1966 at Colchester (as shown in the photo on the previous page as a 'Santa Special') but then in December 1966 it was delicensed again, and as I say, was not noted as being on hire, in contrast to others on the same sheets. In 1967, the only other winter it had with EN as an open topper, it was shown as delicensed throughout, then of course it was sold in January 1968. So, whether Lawrence's pic was 1966, either before or after the Santa Special, or 1967 (although shown as D/L) I can't say for sure.

Up to Date News

On 5 July 2021 WNO 481 was towed from Devon to a workshop near Clacton, so, remarkably, after all its travels it is back close to the town where it made its open top debut 55 years ago in the summer of 1966!

After its spell with Tricentrol, WNO 481 was purchased by Roger White and attended the BAFTA Great British Film Rally, driving from London to Cannes and back.

Below: in Cannes livery at the London Bus Rally in July 1990.

Alan Osborne Collection



2. WNO 483 & Conversions



Five of the KSWs were converted to open top at Prittlewell Works (WNO 474/8/82-3/5) and five at Central Works, Chelmsford (WNO 475/9-81/4).

On this page are rare photos of 2382, WNO 483, being converted at Prittlewell Works in Autumn 1965, taken by **Brian Ashley**. Brian paid two visits, during the first one (above) 2382 still had its original front destination box, but in the second one (right) this has been replaced by a T-type box. In the first photo, Bristol LD 2491, allocated to CF, is alongside, and behind is one of the ex-Moores Guy Arabs. 2382 was one of the four KSWs that was still in service with EN in 1974 and received NBC white and green livery. A photo of it taken in June 1974 was on page 7 of EBN 681.



Seats and railings for the conversions came from the Leyland Titans they replaced on open top services. Right: Withdrawn 2103 (LEV 918) is seen outside PL Works, having had its seats and railings removed, on one of **Brian Ashley's** two visits to Prittlewell Works in Autumn 1965.

2382 ended up as a Show Bus, as seen, below, at Clacton in September 1979. **Alan Osborne.** The next year it was further enhanced with red fleet names and red & blue NBC symbols, for Eastern National's 50th Anniversary celebrations at Central Works on 5 July 1980. It is seen, bottom, at Crawley on the 13th of that month at the Green Line Golden Jubilee event. **Richard Delahoy.** But it was sadly destroyed by fire in an arson attack the next year, at the very place it had been converted to an open topper, Prittlewell Works.





Courtesy of **Cazzy B-R**, her mother Eadie Ross (right of photo) and colleague Pat Murphy with 2382 at Kelvedon garage circa 1970 having prepared it to take part in the Kelvedon Carnival. Note the Bristol LD and two Bristol FLFs behind, the FLF on the right of the photo is 2751, JWC 711. With thanks to **David Edwards**.

3. WNO 484

Black & white photos of this bus with South Wales appeared in EBN 679 along with a colour photo of it in 1977 Silver Jubilee livery, but here is a colour photo in normal South Wales livery, taken by **Alan Osborne** at Ravenhill garage, Swansea in September 1978. This is ex-Eastern National 2386.



4. Derby Day

After sale to Eastern Counties in January 1968, 2381 and 2385 were reunited with some of their erstwhile sisters less than six months later when they both attended the Derby on 29 May. Eastern Counties LKO 239 (WNO 482, former 2381) and Eastern National 2378 (WNO 474) are seen on the approach to the bus turning circle which was used by London Transport service 406F from Epsom Station in July 1968. Both **Alan Osborne**. 2378 went on to become a tree lopper, see next two pages.



5. Tree Loppers



After only two summers, the 10 KSWs converted to open top for use at Clacton and Southend were reduced by three when 2381 and 2385 were sold to Eastern Counties in January 1968 and around the same time 2387 was being used as a tree lopper before being formally converted to one and renumbered 0485 in December of that year. In December 1972, 2378 was also converted to a tree lopper and was renumbered 0474 (the service series fleet numbers were '0' followed by the registration number). 0485 was then withdrawn two months later, although we don't have information as to why 0474 was converted to replace 0485. 0485 is seen top opposite in Harwich Road, Mistley in February 1972. This was before NBC green had been introduced, this shade of green looks to be the same as that in use at the time on metal bus stop poles and request bus stop flags. **Robert Appleton.**



Opposite below: 0474 in NBC green in Brentwood garage on a Group tour on 7 October 1973. Next to 0474 is Bristol FLF 2895, WNO 983F, which eight years later ended up operating on the last day of FLFs on route 251, as illustrated in EBN 686.

Richard Delahoy

In summer 1974, 0474 was on a different task, being used to put up the flags on a Sunday morning for the following week's Brentwood carnival. **Adam Kelleher's** photos taken in Brentwood High Street are not the clearest, taken on an Instamatic camera, but are included for their rarity and historical interest.



By the next summer, 0474 had been repainted all-over yellow with a black radiator grille. It is seen in summer 1975 at Silver End depot with cleaner George Reddick posing. The late **C. Lovick** with thanks to **David Edwards.**



Left: briefly back to WNO 483, with it adorning the cover of the summer 1981 Clacton open top services timetable, although the routes ended up being operated by open top FLFs not KSWs that year.

And, as noted above, WNO 483 did not make it to the end of the season.

Richard Delahoy Collection



6. WNO 480 - Interior

The photo right of 2384, WNO 480, taken summer 1974 on route 67 in its first year in NBC livery, shows the more old-fashioned seats with deeper cushions that were fitted when the KSWs were converted to open top, which came from the Leylands they replaced. **Adam Kelleher.** Compare with the photo of WNO 481 on page 24.

7. Comparisons



2103 is shown in a battered, withdrawn state on page 27. Her sister, 2102 (LEV 917), was far luckier and was preserved. She is seen above at the first Clacton Bus Rally on 7 June 2009 alongside two KSW survivors, 2380 (WNO 478) converted at Prittlewell and 2383 (WNO 479) converted at Central Works. **Adam Kelleher.** Detail differences between PL and CW conversions included different upper deck front windows and dividing panel width, as seen above; different side upper deck windows (the photos on pages 28 (CW) & 29 (PL) give a good comparison); fleet name surrounds on those done at CW were smaller and squarer than the PL ones; an additional chrome strip beneath the fleet name on the PL conversions (as seen on 2380 above); the strip at the front above / to side of the registration number was chrome on PL, whereas on CW this strip was painted cream (above); the PL conversions had fleet names on a cream background (page 29 bottom), the CW ones on green (page 23 middle); those done at PL had T-type rear destinations, those at CW just had rear route numbers.



Part 2: Contemporary will appear next month. As a taster, at the bottom of the previous page is Clacton in 2021, with Heddingham 500 on route 134 in Pier Avenue, on 13 July, exactly 41 years after the photo at the bottom of page 27. **Adam Kelleher**



Above: Arriva Southend heritage livery pairing on route 7 in Rochford Square on the morning of 8 July 2021. 6499 was on the double-deck schooldays working to Ashingdon Schools, 3816 was being driven by the photographer **Matthew Evans**.

Below: Dons of Dunmow DK60 AHO ex-Halton Enviro 200 on rail replacement at Newbury Park Station on 8 May 2021 **David Bell**



Rear Cover Captions

Top: SBC Leisure, Leigh on Sea run a works contract from Southend to the massive Amazon warehouse at Tilbury, organised through the ride sharing company Zeelo. Operation varies from brand new executive coaches to service buses like YT10 WKZ, a Scania N270UU / Optare that was new to Beestons of Hadleigh (Suffolk). The route starts in Southchurch Boulevard, outside Southend High School for Girls, with four departures daily. The 1700 departure on 14 May 2021. **Richard Delahoy**

Bottom: First Essex Volvo Hybrid 69913, with a relatively unusual large fleet number in an unusual colour and position, on route 100 opposite Chelmsford Railway Station on 14 June 2021. **David Moth**



ESSEX BUS MAGAZINE Issue 688 August 2021
Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964