

ESSEX BUS NEWS

**Issue 541
May 2009**



ESSEX BUS ENTHUSIASTS GROUP
www.essexbus.org.uk

The ubiquitous Dart

Displacing Mercedes and Solos on the Brentwood town service, former First Hampshire & Dorset, now First Essex Mini Pointer 43845 is seen at Brentwood Station.

Kevin Smith



Hedingham's L348 (EU56 FLR) passing the low bridge at Kirby Cross on ECC contract route 7.

Russell Young



L325 (EX02RYR) in Braintree Bus Station on 29 April 2009, having worked in from Steeple Bumpstead on their Wednesdays only service 23.

Chris Stewart



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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First Essex Enviro 200 44518 newly into service on 8 May, in Marine Parade, Dovercourt.

Chris Stewart

Dates for your diary

■ PRESS DATES

For inclusion in EBN dated

reports should reach Editors by

planned despatch date

June

6 June

18 June

July

27 June

16 July

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

2009 programme

- ▶ **Monday June 8** - evening visit to Stephenson's of Rochford and local study tour. The tour bus will be parked in Southend Travel Centre from 1900 onwards to allow members to meet and view the local scene, departing at 1945 for the depot visit (via a pick up at Rochford Station forecourt at 2000) and then a short local tour. Drop back at Rochford Station c. 2130, Southend 2145. If coming by car, please park in

central Southend or at Rochford Station - there is NO parking at the depot.

- ▶ **TUESDAY July 14** - evening visit to the Castle Point Transport Museum (jointly with the Omnibus Society). Arrive from 1900 onwards.
- ▶ no meeting in **August**
- ▶ **Monday September 14** - "Bristol REs home and away", slide show by *Chris Stewart*
- ▶ **Monday October 12** - to be advised
- ▶ **Monday November 9** - "Essex buses from the 1960s, 70s and 80's, part 2 - F onwards", slide show by *Martin Weyell*
- ▶ **Monday December 14** - Christmas Social and "20 years ago" slide show by *Richard Delahoy*

Meetings from **September** onwards will resume at our new venue, Wickford Cricket Club.

■ 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*

2009 programme

- ▶ **Friday June 12** - *Dave Mitchell*: "Hong Kong in the 80's"
- ▶ **Tuesday June 23** - **Evening visit to Talisman** - pick up at Colchester North Station at 19.00. Phone **01621 857509** to book. £5 donation to charity please.
- ▶ **Friday July 10** - *Dave Arnold*: "Channel Islands & Plopsaland @ De panne"
- ▶ **Friday August 14** - tba
- ▶ **Friday September 11** - *Russell Young*: "Around the UK and Ireland in 200 operators"
- ▶ **Fridays October 9, November 13, and December 11**: tba

■ EVENTS

- ▶ **Sunday June 7** - **Clacton Running Day** - Clacton Factory Outlet, vintage bus display (entrants welcome), enthusiast stalls (it is hoped that the Group stall will be present), vintage bus service from Clacton town, rail station and Jaywick. See advertisement on page 3. www.envoc.org.uk
- ▶ **Saturday / Sunday June 26-7** : **London Transport Museum**, Guided Tours at Acton Depot.
- ▶ **Sunday July 5** - **North Weald Bus & Coach Rally** ~ 50 years of the production RMs.; North Weald Airfield. Vintage Bus Services to & from Epping Central Line Station and Ongar for Epping Ongar Railway. Rally open 10.30 to 17.00. Admission £8.00 (includes travel on route 339 to and from Epping Station).
- ▶ *Please note: details of rallies etc. are published in good faith, and we rely on information supplied by the organisers or others at the time of going to press. 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.*

■ VISITS, TRIPS and TOURS

- ▶ **Sunday June 23: Evening visit to Talisman** - See under North Essex Meetings.



Clacton Running Day



**FREE VINTAGE BUS LINKS TO
CLACTON FACTORY OUTLET
FROM CLACTON TOWN CENTRE,
RAIL STATION & JAYWICK**

**VINTAGE BUS DISPLAY
ALL VEHICLES WELCOME**

**ENTHUSIAST STALLS AT
CLACTON FACTORY OUTLET**

FREE PARKING ALL DAY LONG

**CLACTON FACTORY OUTLET
SHOPS OPEN AS USUAL (11AM-5PM)
BRING YOUR LOVED ONES TO
SHOP WHILE YOU ENJOY THE
BUSES**

**CLOSE TO MAJOR ROAD LINKS
INCLUDING A133/120
FOLLOW SIGNS FOR CLACTON FACTORY
OUTLET**

Sponsored by



**Clacton
Factory
Outlet
&**

RIGTON
CLACTON FACTORY OUTLET

SUNDAY JUNE 7TH

**FEEDER BUSES FROM SOUTHBEND, BRENTWOOD,
& HALSTEAD, ALL PICKING UP EN-ROUTE.**

FOR MORE INFO VISIT WWW.ENVOC.ORG.UK

or write to 24 Russell Court, Churchill Way, Colchester, CO2 8SR

Photos are for illustration only and vehicle shown may not appear at the actual event.

All photos are used with permission and are taken by either David Edwards or Eric Thompson



New Group Publication

Blackwells of Earls Colne ~ the story of an Essex independent bus operator

We are pleased to announce the imminent publication of a new book, the biggest and most lavish the Group has yet produced. In A4 size with 72 pages on glossy paper, extensively illustrated and with colour pictures on the covers, the book by Michael Yelton tells the story of an enterprising Essex bus operator, from the early days around the time of the First World War to the sale of the business to Heddingham & District in 1965.

The book includes extracts from timetables, Notices & Proceedings, posters, tickets and a full fleet list; there is also a section on the buses and coaches that Blackwells handled in a dealer capacity, many being dismantled on site - and we have the pictures to prove it!

The book is expected to be available at the Clacton Rally/Running Day on June 7th and will be on sale on our stall there.

Members can also obtain copies post free from the Publications Officer - address on page 5. Orders received during May and early June will be fulfilled as soon as the book is received from the printers.

Blackwells of Earls Colne

An Essex independent bus operator



Michael Yelton

Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

£9.95
post-free

Welcome to new member

We are delighted to welcome the following new member who has recently joined the Group:

Glyn Calvert of Enfield - 988

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 Shobury 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 Shobury 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

South Essex Rapid Transit



Arriva Kent Thameside Fastrack Volvo 3816 (GN07 AVC) at Southend Civic Centre on Monday 20 April, prior to the demonstration run for Council officers and members.

Matthew Evans

Essex RT Reprise



The chaotic scene outside Barking garage at lunchtime on April 7, 1979 as the last RT in normal LT Service, RT624, enters the garage. We are all standing in the middle of the normally busy Longbridge Road, having brought the traffic to a standstill! Richard Delahoy

Thirty years ago saw the bus industry in a period of significant change, with crew operation and half-cab buses being rapidly phased out. The ubiquitous Leyland National was dominating new bus deliveries and ushered in a relatively boring phase - or at least, that's how it looked to many of us then.

Crew operation and the last FLFs were phased out on Eastern National in 1982, likewise regular crew operation on Southend Transport had ceased the previous year (and anyone then who had predicted its return 10 years later with Routemasters would have been sent to the funny farm!). London, of course, was different as Routemaster crew operation was expected to continue for some years to come. But 1979 did see the end of two famous and respected types of bus, the RF and the RT. The sadness of seeing them withdrawn was tempered a little by the excitement of the last rites. I was lucky enough to be a passenger on the very last RF in LT service - and, in true last day style, our driver circumnavigated a roundabout twice

to make sure we really were the last, forcing the duplicate to get in front of us! That Friday night at Kingston saw a lot of people celebrating the end of the RF but didn't really prepare us for the huge numbers that were to descend on Barking a week later on Saturday April 7, 1979 to see off the RT. As Ken Blacker recalls in *RT - The Story of a London Bus*, "The closure of RT operation had wisely been arranged to take place during the hours of daylight for the convenience of the many who wished to view the proceedings", with RT operation ceasing around lunchtime on the Saturday.

I missed out riding on the very last RT - I was about ten away from the front of the queue when the Inspector declared the bus "full", but managed to get back to Barking in time to see RT624 arrive for the final time, amidst a huge crowd outside the garage.

Thirty years on, Roger Wright's London Bus Company, supported by Ensign Bus, decided to commemorate the anniversary of the end of RT operation in London by running three

special routes on Easter Sunday and Monday, 12 and 13 April. Recreating the last RT route, the 62, was rather too complicated as this is still an extant TfL bus service, so instead three former Essex area RT-operated routes were resurrected in a way that didn't conflict with existing services. The services were linked, enabling circular trips to be enjoyed, and comprised:

175A Romford - Passingford Bridge - Ongar
 247 Romford - Gidea Park - Brentwood
 339 Brentwood - Ongar - Epping.

Buses used were London Bus Co RTs 3062, 3228 (freshly restored into Green Line livery)

and 3871, plus RTW75, whilst Ensign provided RTs 624 (the very last one in LT service), Cravens bodied 1431 (red) and 1499 (green), 3232 (in Ensign blue/silver) and 4421. A feeder trip from London also ran with RCL2260 – just a pity it didn't display "721" as I saw it powering up Brentwood High Street!

The choice of routes allowed interesting circular trips and provided some good photographic locations, as this selection of photos shows.

Richard Delahoy, with thanks to Russell Young for additional information



For very many years a well known LT bus terminus, the Robin Hood & Little John pub at Brentwood sees Ensign's RT624 - the very last RT in public service with LT 30 years ago - arriving, having just turned round after its run from Romford. It contrasts with Green Line liveried RT3228 powering past on the 339, London Bus Company owner Roger Wright at the wheel.

Chris Stewart (RT624) and Richard Delahoy (RT3228)





RT30 Run 2 Day Golden



"Golden Phoamer" rover ti
day bus services in the Her
1960s. Routes ran with int
numerous pubs. They were
services (no mean feat in th
in the name of Mittish Mo
Colin Taffel.

Country pubs provide an
interesting photographic
backdrop: RT3871 pauses
at the Thatchers Arms at
Warley (Richard Delahoy)
whilst RT4421 waits time
outside The Rabbits, near
Passingford Bridge (Chris
Stewart).

Brentwood High Street
resonates to the sound of
a long Routemaster coach
as RCL2260 works the
morning feeder from
London to Ongar,
rekindling memories of
721s passing the same
point until the last day of
1971.

Richard Delahoy

Running Day on 'Phoamer'

April 2009

£10.00

since the last RT type bus was
service. Routes 175A, 247, 339.

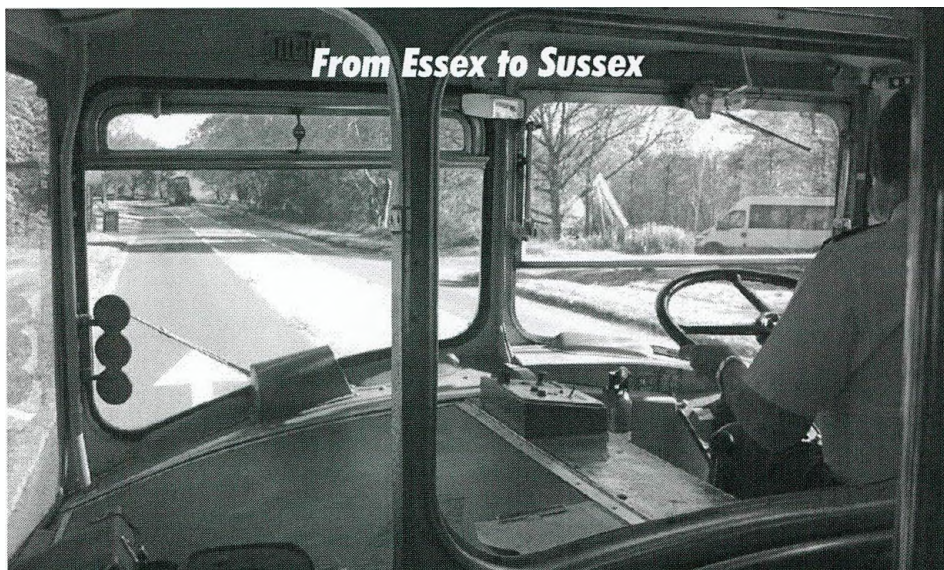
ickets were a feature of one
fordshire area in the late
resting buses via
icensed as ordinary bus
ose pre-deregulation days)
ctors, and organised by

*Roof box contrasts:
Climbing Kings Road in
Brentwood, rare Cravens
bodied RT1499 shows a
full blind display for its 52
minute run through the
Essex countryside to
Epping, contrasting with
red RT3062 in Great
Warley Village mid-way
through its 46 minute run
into London's suburbia.
Both Chris Stewart*

*Celebrating 30 years in
Ensign's fleet, RT3232
was originally restored in
Green Line livery but for
many years now has
carried Ensign's blue and
silver colours. Here it is
on full lock as it turns out
of Ongar Station forecourt
to take up service on the
175A to Romford. Ongar
Station was open during
the two running days, to
view the progress of the
Epping Ongar Railway
preservation project.*

Richard Delahoy





The road ahead as viewed from the platform of LS4. RD at the wheel.

On 26 April, Stephenson's former Southdown 'Queen Mary' 424 DCD took part in the Country Bus Running Day aimed at recreating the old network of routes around East Grinstead. Suitable blinds were devised, London Country Bus Services 'on hire' stickers and fleetnumber LS4 applied. Now, LCBS *did* have LS1-3, ex-Southdown, based at Godstone (GD) and these *did* work route 409 (Croydon - Forest Row), so this was historically as accurate as possible.

The crew for the day were Drvs Delahoy (badge FF30243), Forsdyke (B793) and Cdr Harman (N90734), so to say we were overmanned would be an understatement. The wages bill will have the Accounts Dept. in palpitations, and as for the overall tea consumption ... !

Our duty comprised: Godstone Green - East Grinstead (tea break) - Forest Row / Forest Row - East Grinstead (lunch-break) - Dormansland / Dormansland - Forest Row / Forest Row - East Grinstead (tea break) - Oxted Station / Oxted Station - East Grinstead, all as service 409, a shift of 10½ hours, including RD depot runs.

"LS4" performed flawlessly. The engine ticks



Two-thirds (the better-looking two-thirds) of the crew, Terry and Richard, pose at Forest Row

over like clockwork, and has plenty of 'urge' when the open road beckons - see photo above. Following the rear blind mishap (EBN537), Terry managed to liberate a set of white-on-red numerals (Southdown did have these) from a Hong Kong Dennis Condor. Now, all that is needed is a matched set of (ideally, Southdown pattern) white-on-black numbers for the front, to replace the current mixture. Can anyone help please?



Dormansland 'Plough', and (below) Oxted.



The weather was brilliant; there was a good mix of enthusiasts and the general public, young and old, and "LS4" carried healthy loads all day. In fact, I think we did better than many of the London vehicles, for Southdown remains one of the most highly-respected and fondly-remembered names, and the Queen Mary is surely an all-time classic. If only you could take the top off, they all said ! (we can't; Mr Souter still has all the rails).

Among the VIP passengers were Bob Palmer and John Boylett. No Danish ladies this time, but we did carry a German lady, who had cycled into East Grinstead from Forest Row for a loaf of bread, and promptly cycled back again to bring her English husband and son to ride on *die große London Doppeldeckers* (it was too complicated to explain that "LS4" wasn't strictly a London bus, and why some London double-deckers were green, not red).

I must also record thanks to Anne-Marie, *propriétaire* of the Riverview Café (in the old coal merchant's office) at Forest Row station, who served us humble bus crews with complimentary coffee. Ah, the privileges of rank ! (The station, on the Three Bridges - Tunbridge Wells Central line, closed in 1967, but some buildings remain intact).

A good day in good company.

David Harman



Service Changes

Arriva Southend

7 Jun 09	7/8	D	Shoeburyness to Rayleigh revised timetable
	60	M-F	Southend to Canewdon service withdrawn.
22 Jun 09	23	Mon	Southend to Shoeburyness new Monday only service.

Ensign

2 May 09	73	D	Lakeside to Tilbury minor timing adjustments to Mon to Sat timetable.
	83	M-S	Lakeside to Chadwell St Mary minor timing adjustments.

Executive Minibuses

5 May 09	1	S	New service: Broadway East - Eastbrooks - Grimston Road - Basildon Bus Station.
	552	M-F	Downham Road - Mercer Road - Billericay Railway Station. Replacing existing First service.

First Essex

5 Apr 09	8C	Sun	Colchester to Monkwick service uses Queen Street instead of Bus Station.
6 Apr 09	11	M-F	Highwoods to Colchester North Station 1930 from Rail Station to operate 5 mins later (updated information).
	15	M-F	Shrub End to Colchester North Station 1930 from Rail Station to operate 5 mins later (updated information).
	83	M-S	Colchester to Mount Bures/ Colne Engaine amendment to timetable, journeys extended from Chappel to Colne Engaine (updated information).



Executive Minibuses Solo EM09 BUS on their first day on the 552. Kevin Smith

	88A	M-S	Colchester to Halstead the 1545 (MF) and 1740 (Sat) will not serve Beacon End Stanway.
3 May 09	351	D	Chelmsford to Brentwood additional journey at 0615 from Chelmsford and early morning will operate to/from Warley (updated information).
4 May 09	2/A	D	Southend to Basildon reintroduction of afternoon school journey as 2A from Deanes School.
11 May 09	24	M-S	Rawreth to Southchurch short term route change due to closure of Woodfield Road for gas main repairs.
14 Jun 09	45	D	Moulsham Lodge to Writtle minor pm timetable changes Monday to Friday.
	8C	Sun	Colchester to Monkwick revised timetable.
15 Jun 09	5/6	M-S	Holland to Bockings Elm minor am timetable change on Monday to Friday.
	7/8	M-S	Clacton to Walton revised timetable with increase frequency to every 20 mins.
	10/11	M-S	Great Clacton to Jaywick now includes new service 12 remains every 15 mins Clacton to Jaywick but reduced to every 30 mins Clacton to Great Clacton.
	13	M-S	Walton to Frinton new town service.
	15	Sch	Jaywick Tower Camp to Bishop Park College new schoolday Service.
	17/18	M-S	Clacton to Point Clear minor Monday to Friday am changes.
	63	M-S	Colchester Garrison Estate to North Station new service.
	65	D	Highwoods to Stanway revised timetable.
	74	D	Colchester to Clacton minor am timetable change to Monday to Friday service.
	76	D	Colchester to Clacton minor am timetable change to Monday to Friday service.
Imperial Bus Co			
5 May 09	H1	M-S	Harlow to Loughton revised timetable and route change in Harlow, Loughton and Debden area.
	261	M-S	Brentwood to Blackmore additional journey 1805 from Brentwood Mondays to Fridays.
Network Colchester			
20 Apr 09	701	Sch	Harwich to Colchester Norman Way, service diverted via Elmstead Market with minor timetable changes.
NIBS			
6 Apr 09	237	M-S	Basildon to South Woodham rerouted in school holidays to serve Festival Leisure Park Basildon (updated information).
1 Jun 09	104/6	M-F	Langdon Hills to Basildon amendment to timetable.
Regal Busways			
5 May 09	16	M-S	Chelmsford to Wethersfield route diverted to serve Little Dunmow.
Stephensons			
5 May 09	1/1A	M-F	Basildon to Pitsea new service
Viceroy			
20 Apr 09	59	M-F	Saffron Walden to Audley End revised timetable to meet trains in mornings and evenings (updated information).

Paul Harvey
(acknowledgements to LOTS, Essex & Hertfordshire
County Council, Richard Delahoy, Harlowride and First)

■ FIRST ESSEX BUSES LTD

New vehicles

44516 YX09ACV ADL Dart 4	ADL Enviro 200	B35F
44517 YX09ACY ADL Dart 4	ADL Enviro 200	B35F
44518 YX09ACX ADL Dart 4 SFD361AR49GY11105	ADL Enviro 200	B35F 8254/3
44519 YX09ADO ADL Dart 4	ADL Enviro 200	B35F

44516/9 were delivered initially to Westway on 29th April, with 44517/8 arriving at CN the following day. 44519 was in use for driver familiarisation at DT during the week commencing 2nd May, and 44518 was the first to enter service during the afternoon of 8th.

Acquired vehicles for driver training

from First Manchester

60117 N553WVR Volvo B10B-58 YV3R13F12TA002354	Wright DP50F U160 new 2/96
60304 M509PNA Volvo B10B-58 YV3R13F16SA001688	Wright DP50F T103 new 2/95 (first taxed 1.2.1995)
60305 M510PNA Volvo B10B-58 YV3R13F14SA001706	Wright DP50F T104 new 2/95 (first taxed 7.2.1995)
60319 N524WVR Volvo B10B-58 YV3R13F1?SA002030	Wright DP50F U131 new 9/95
60321 N526WVR Volvo B10B-58 YV3R13F1?SA002082	Wright DP50F U133 new 9/95 (all new to GM Buses (N))

The VIN number of 69434 is reported as YV3R6K6288A127421.

43845-8 were all first registered (according to DVLA) on 1.9.2005.

Vehicles on loan

Yellow School Buses 68564-6 (SF55TXA/B/C) from First Glasgow – now stored at CN, having been used to cover for native BMCs returning to the manufacturers. At least 68564/6 were used on Ingatestone Anglo-European School routes 618/9.

Allocation changes

Period 1: 29th March 2009 to 25th April 2009

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

42482 BE-CF; 42484 BE-CF; 42487 BE-CF; 43845 FGC-BN; 43846 FGC-BN; 43847 FGC-BN; 43848 FGC-BN; 46109 HH-D/L(D); 46136 D/L(D)-sold; 46137 D/L(D)-sold; 46145 BN-D/L(D); 46146 D/L(D)-HH; 46147 D/L(D)-HH; 46820 CN-D/L(D); 46828 BN-D/L(D); 47223 CF-CN; 53113 BN-CF; 53114 BN-BE; 53115 BN-BE; 53116 BN-BE; 60103 CF-BN; 60104 CF-BN; 60117 FGC-DS; 60130 CR-D/L(S); 60304 FGC-DS; 60305 FGC-DS; 60319 FGC-DS; 60321 FGC-DS; 60484 DS-RES; 67036 DS-D/L(S); 67040 DS-D/L(S); 65680 CF-CR; 65681 CF-CR; 65682 CF-CR; 65683 CF-CR; 65684 CF-CR; 66802 CR-CF; 66807 CR-CF; 66808 CR-CF; 66809 CR-CF; 66810 CR-CF

43846/7 had yet to enter service on by 7th May, and as a result 53113/4 remained at BN (as did 46145). 53116 returned to CF by April 13th. Not all of the



Enviro 200 debut

Handover day ~ 1 May at Westway: 44516-8, ADL, First and Essex County Council all present.

Nick Field

In service ~ 44516 departing from Harwich on Village Link route 3 on Sunday 10 May.

Russell Young



Disposals (period 1):

46136 46137 Erith Commercials (for scrap)
Subsequently – 46109 to private owner (preservation)

Repaints

Period 12: none

Period 1: 43732, 65676, 43731

CR65673 had lost Overground 100 branding by week commencing 22nd March (except offside roof cove). CN47102 now has a super rear advert for Essex CC road safety

Area News - workings and sightings

A bit of catching up from the Brentwood area, for the record:

Service 73 - 46167 (20th Feb), 46171 (23rd), 46144 (24th), 41642 (28th) on 73, 46811 (14th Mar)

Service 351: 46132 (14th Mar), 65680 (23rd Mar), 42921 on first 351 (24th) but then Cheetah again thereafter, 47101 (31st)

Service 551: 67013 (25th Mar), 66800 (31st – 17.45 at BD Stn)

Clacton & Harwich (DT)

During April, various loans to DT were CR30558, CR34285 and CR34315 (DT31377 is thought to be still away). Meanwhile CN have used both CR34286 and CR34290. Primo DT57001 has been out of use at CN with a broken rear axle while DT57002 also suffered drive line and axle faults. Nevertheless it returned to service in early May before being displaced to store by new 44518.

Colchester

A fire in a derelict pub at the Old Heath disrupted the 66 group on 23rd March. Services from Colchester couldn't reach Old Heath or Rowhedge termini, as Old Heath Road was closed at the junction with Fingringhoe Road and Rowhedge Road.

On 1st April Osborne Street in Colchester was closed until mid afternoon because of a burst water main. Services affected were:

North Station bound 61s; Shrub End/St Michaels bounds 64/As; Tollgate bound 65s; West Bergholt/North Station bound 66/As; Colchester bound 67s; Chelmsford bound 70s/71s; Maldon bound 75s; Halstead bound 88s. They were all diverted via Southway and Headgate.

North Hill, Colchester was closed between 08.30 and 10.30 on 28th April owing to a road accident. Routes affected were X22, 61, 62, 66/A - they were diverted via Crouch St, Southway, Balcerne Hill (northbound); Balcerne Hill, Southway, Headgate (southbound).

March

2nd CR34310, CR60102 and CR67005 all on 65.

3rd CR67008 on 65

11th CR67003 on 65 (and 12th)

24th CR67006 on 64 (ECC evening journey).

26th CN34314 on DT103

April

1st CR20102 on 76 - the a.m. working that CR does, usually with an Olympian; CN43741 on DT4 covering for Solo.

11th CR61054 and CR62407 on 72

14th DT65652 on CN74

15th CR67008 on 65

16th CN65691 on DT103/4

- 17th CR66812 on 88 (10.50 ex HD)
- 19th CR20110, CF31198 and CF34807 on rail replacement
- 23rd CR34290 on early CN76 (usually Dart)
- 25th CR60757 on 88 (07.50 ex HD)
- 28th CR34315 on DT103, DT65651 on CN17
- 29th CN43741 on DT104, 66817 back at CR (seen on the CR duty a.m. 76)

May

- 2nd CR62410 on 71 and 72

Chelmsford & Braintree

Scrolling rear LED displays have been decommissioned over the last few months, 42 branding has now been removed from all vehicles and advert frames have begun to appear on some vehicles.

March – a snapshot of the variety now to be found on the 36/36X (courtesy John Collins)
(all times are from South Woodham unless otherwise shown)

- 2nd CF60104 on 10.41
- 3rd CF66828 on 10.11, CF65681 on 11.11
- 4th CR66798 on 10.11, CF65683 on 11.11
- 5th CF47228 on 10.41, CF65682 on 11.41
- 6th CF65682 on 11.41
- 7th CF66829 on 10.41, CF65682 on 15.41
- 10th CF65682 on 10.11, CF60104 on 10.41
- 12th CF47223 on 12.41
- 13th CF69434 on 09.11, CF65684 on 10.11
- 14th BE40734 on 09.11
- 16th CF66789 on 07.19, CF60104 on 07.29 36X, CF34815 on 07.35, BE42485 on 08.22
- 17th CF47223 on 06.54, BE42483 on 10.11
- 18th CF66829 on 07.29 36X, CF47252 on 13.41
- 20th CF65681 on 07.19, CF34807 on 07.35, BE42485 on 08.22
- 21st BE42485 on 09.11
- 24th CF60104 on 07.29 36X, CF66799 on 08.22
- 25th CF66830 on 07.19, CF60104 on 36X 07.19
- 26th CF65682 on 06.40 ex CF

April – general

- 5th CF34807 on rail replacement (CR-BLY)
- 7th CF53118 on 18.05 ex CF 351
- 8th CF34807 on 351 (07.40 and 14.05 ex CF), CF60104 on 42
- 11th CF42920 on 351
- 15th CF31198 on 351, CF56006 as BE driver shuttle
- 18th CF42922 on 351
- 20th CF65678 on Witham-Braintree emergency rail replacement
- 21st CF53128 on first 351
- 24th CF53112 on 21 (06.42 ex HD) and then 70 BE-CF (07.30), CF47252 on 41 / 51, 46826 on 40 / 50
- 28th CF53112 on last 351
- 30th CF56006 on first 351 (a Cheetah is, or was, fairly normal)

May

- 8th CF53130 on 31, CF53137 on 351 (13.05 ex CF)

Basildon & Hadleigh

March

- 25th BN 67002 and BN67013 on route 25, BN34011 on 25 (14.30 Basildon Hospital – Southend)



The transfer of service 25 (Basildon - Rayleigh - Southend) from Hadleigh to Basildon depot has brought an increased variety of First vehicles to the Southend area.

above: 67009, from the batch of Lances new to Eastern National. Peter Mansbridge
below: former Cambus Olympian 34011, with a destination that appears to be partly in Greek!

John G Lidstone



April

- 1st BN41644 on 8A, BN41650, BN46145 and BN46827 on 5, BN46826/8 on 551, BN65668 (100) on 100
- 3rd (RES)46132 on early 551
- 4th BN46169 on 21, BN46828 on 551
- 7th 46132 and BN41647 on 81/82, BN43845 first seen on 73, BN46828 on 25A
- 8th BN46811 on 73 and 82
- 14th BN60104 noted for first time
- 16th BN43848 on 73 for first time, BN46170 on 100, BN66813 on 8
- 17th BN43742 on 551 (18.15 approx), BN46811 on 73
- 20th BN41645 on 8, BN43732 on 22, BN46811 on 73, BN65667 and BN66803 on 25B
- 21st BN46811 on 73
- 22nd BN46827 on 551, BN60104 on 25, BN65667 (100) on 100, BN66827 on 5
- 23rd BN43744 on 8, BN66800 on 5, BN66820 on 25
- 24th CF65032 (P&R), CR66814 and CF34815 all noted in BN. BN60104 on 25, BN53114 on 25B, BN41644 on 73
- 25th BN65632 on 100
- 28th BN41642 on 73, BN41653 on 8A, BN43744 on 8A
- 29th BN41653 on 8, BN43744 on 8A, BN66806 (first sighting in use) on 100, BN66820 on 5, BN67036 on 5
- 30th Olympian BN31373 on 5 (exchanged at lunchtime for BN41642), BN43800 on 200, BN46827 on 25B

May

- 2nd BN43742 on 100, BN46811 on 73 around 19.00 (out of use at BN by 6th)
- 5th BN41637 on 8A, CF56006 on new X40, BN65667 (100) on 100
- 6th BN43800 on 73 (not noted on this since MPD 43848 entered service), BN46827 on 551, BN46828 on 25B, BN43743 on 5, BN41640 and BN43742 on 8, BN65670 on 8A, BN66803 on 25
- 7th BN51803 on 551 and Brentwood 81/82

Other News

Olympian 30669 (F173XYG) remains in CN yard (for spares).

Former ENOC/First Essex vehicles

Restored RELH6G 1404 (VHK177L, currently carrying 819XUP) is now being operated commercially by owner Steve Graham (www.classiccoachesnorthwest.co.uk) and was in use on rail replacement work between Warrington Bank Quay and Manchester Piccadilly on 4th May.

LD5G 2484 (297JHK) has been for sale again in the USA, whilst bar conversion VR 3074 (KOO792V) has been offered on ebay.

First Devon & Cornwall Olympian 34809 (C409HJN) was seen heading for Erith Commercial on 21st April.

Sources: Own observations, with many thanks to First Essex and to P Ashton, A Bird, T Clark, J Collins, D Edwards, M Farmer, D Flatman, N Mansfield, J Podgorski, D Pretty, I Ransom, J Salmon, C Sigston, 'Solo', A Timms, A Toms, TBL177M, R Webb, R West, R Whitley, the Essex Bus, South West, First Group Fans and British Buses Abroad in North America y-groups, www.bustlistsontheweb.co.uk, Real Bus News, LOTS, PSV Circle, 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 Limited

Vehicles in

3276/8/9 (T276/8/9 JKM) Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B37F
3276/8 have come from Dartford. 3279 was most recently at Maidstone.

Vehicles Out

3175 (M200 CBB) Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer to Maidstone
3007/8 (L509/10 CPJ) Dennis Dart/East Lancs withdrawn for disposal.

Olympian Update

The last remaining Alexander bodied Olympian 5396 (F576 SMG) has been renumbered 5096 to avoid confusion with recently acquired Volvo Olympian 5396 (P936 MKL). 5096 is the next Olympian due for withdrawal.

It is reported that inroads will be made into the 5402-5 (H262 -5 GEV) batch of Olympians, new to Southend Transport in 1990, during June/July. Photographers are advised to catch them while they can.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Matthew Arnold, Richard Delahoy, Essex Bus y-group

Network Colchester

Vehicles In

243 (G643 BPH) Volvo Citybus/East Lancs from Burtons, Haverhill.
This vehicle is fitted with an LED destination display.

network
colchester

Vehicles Out

282 (R382 GTW) DAF DB250L/ Northern Counties to Dawson Rentals.

Vehicle Workings

Leyland Olympians C77 CHM and C92 CHM were hired from Stephenson's of Essex between 20th April and 1st May due to an increase in vehicle requirements as result of a rail replacement service being operated between Thorpe-Le-Soken and Walton. The hired Olympians were only used on school services and not rail or service work.

Haverhill-based Burtons Olympian/Alexander 239 (F639 LMJ) and Volvo Citybus/East Lancs 683 (H683 GPF) were loaned to Colchester to help cover the extra rail replacement work. The two buses arrived on 3rd April. 239 was swapped for Volvo Citybus/Alexander 219 (G619 OTV) on 11th April. 219 and 683 returned to Haverhill at end of service on 18th April. 219 and 683 were borrowed again on Saturdays 25th April and 2nd May.

Unusual Workings

April 25th Dart SLF/Caetano 106 on 1.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Richard Delahoy, D. Flatman, John Podgorski and Keith Sadler



Any colour so long as it's white
Network Colchester 295 (Y295 PDN), one of two all white Solos recently acquired from Link Line of Harlesden, working ECC contract route 78 at Colchester North Station. Russell Young **Amber Coaches** of Rayleigh's **BX06 NZZ**, one of a pair of Polish-built Autosan A1012Ts, bought new in 2006. Seen parked at Braintree on 29 April. Chris Stewart



Excel Passenger Logistics

The Medway - Gatwick and Manchester / Liverpool airport services mentioned last month have adopted the **airportbycoach** branding. www.airportbycoachmedway.co.uk/

David Harman

excel

Stephensons of Essex

Leyland Olympian/ECW UAR 219Y (OFS 693Y, SIL 1075, TSO 29X) has been sold to Lawtons Coaches, Boston. Scania L94/Irizars P20 GRT and P26 RFS have gone to Abbots of Leeming.

stephensons

Ian Ransom with thanks to Lyn Watson

Regal Busways

A further former Thames Transit Dennis Dart/Plaxton acquired from Stagecoach South East is M93 WBW, numbered 513 here. *Ian Ransom*

regal busways

Stansted Transit

Acquired is Ford Transit DN54 EKB.
MCW Metrobus POG 600Y has been withdrawn.

stansted transit

Ian Ransom

Trustybus

Former Ipswich Buses Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs P131 PPV has been acquired. It has been converted to single door and is on new fleet livery.

trustybus

Ian Ransom

Ensignbus

ensignbus

■ DEALER STOCK MOVEMENTS

Vehicles in

from

Aintree Coaches: Olympian G864 XDX

Arriva Midlands: Olympians R626/9 MNU

Arriva the Shires: Olympians G292 UMJ, C31 CHM, Volvo B10B M103 UKX

Decker Bus: Metrobuses A729 THV, KYV 645X

Dublin Bus: Olympians 98-D-20400/2-5/23-5/27/8, 97-D-357/9.

East London : Darts V147/9/57 WVX and W196 DNO
Linkfast: Metrobuses KYV 724/9X
Lothian Buses: Olympians P412-5/21/2/4/28 KSX
Carlos Rodrigues: RML2406/2675
Stagecoach East Midlands: Olympians K354/5/8 DWJ
Stagecoach Fife: Olympian J199 YSS
Stagecoach in South Wales: B10Ms N91 RVK, M410 BFG, M916 WJK
Stagecoach Manchester: Scania J132-4/45 HMT, K846-8/51/8/60/62/71 LMK.
Stagecoach North East: Volvo B10Ms N205/6/15/17LTN, M547/8/50/51/52 SPY
 L578 HSG, KSU464
Stagecoach North West: Mercedes 709 N215 UHH
Whippet Coaches: Volvo B10Ms J722/3 KBC, Metrobus POG 514Y.

Vehicles out

	<i>to</i>
Mercedes 709 N215 UHH :	ACL Travel , Hewish, Somerset
Volvo B10M M916 WJK:	Aintree Coachline , Merseyside
Excel P192 SGV:	Carters Coaches , Ipswich
Dart S529 KFL:	Central Buses , Birmingham
Dart V157 MVX:	Chalkwell , Sittingbourne, Kent
Dublin Olympians 97-D-363, 98-D-20393,	98-D-20395
	now R987/978/989 KAR with
	Chambers , Bures, Suffolk
Volvo B10M L157 JNH:	Coastal Liner , Wolverhampton
Scania H466 GVM, Volvo B10M KSU 464:	Decker Bus , Peterborough
Dart N308 DSL:	Eastonways , Ramsgate, Kent
Scania 113 M113 RNK:	Harrogate Coach Travel
Olympians R626/9 MNU:	Hedingham Omnibuses
Olympian P422 KSX:	Herberts , Shefford, Beds.
Olympian M790 NBA:	Holloway , Scunthorpe
Olympians G864 XDX, G102 AAD, K355 DWJ,	
Scania's J132-5 HMT, K846-8/51/8/6/2/71LMK:	Johnson , Hodthorpe, Notts.
Volvo B10Ms N205/6/15/17 LTN:	Liddell , Auchinleck
Olympian P415 KSX:	Marshall , Sutton-on-Trent, Lincs.
BMC Falcons CN53 GWP/O:	McEwens , Dumfries
Darts HX51 LPJ/K/L/O/U/V/Y/Z:	McGill , Barrhead
Dublin Olympian 96-D-280	now N661 JNO with
	New Horizon Travel , Frating, Essex
Olympians C31 CHM, C234 ENE, D388 XRS,	F300 DRJ,
Metrobuses A707 THV, KYV 645X:	On-a-Mission , Letchworth, Herts.
Trident PO51 UMY:	Rotala Group , Birmingham
Volvo B10M PSU 788:	Swallow , Rainham, Essex
Optare Excel R189 DDX:	Tate , Barnsley
Dublin Olympian 98-D-20394	now R983KAR with
	TM Travel , Sheffield
Tridents X604/5 EGK:	Whippet , Fenstanton, Cambs.
Olympian E915 DRD, Scania H463 GVM:	Qualiti Conversions , Southampton
RML2343, Metrobus B300 WUL:	Trainpeople Ltd , Perth
Dart MPD X668 LLX, Excel R197 DDX:	Transport for London
Metrobus BYX 174V:	Danny Chabaud , Romagne, France.
Excls P194/6 SGV:	City Sightseeing , Cyprus.
RM EDS221A:	Training Services Inc , Virginia, USA

■ ENSIGNBUS LTD., Purfleet

Acquired vehicles

from Dublin Bus RV341/2 (97-D-341/2)

163 P563 SWC Volvo Olympian YN2RV18V3 27565 Alexander (B) D23.11 H47/27D 6/1997

168 P568 SWC Volvo Olympian YN2RV18V3 27623 Alexander (B) D23.12 H47/27D 6/1997

Disposals

Metroliner 404 (304 CLT) to RedRoute Buses, Northfleet, Kent. The registration will be retained by Ensign. Darts 701 (L101 HHV) and 761 (R561 UOT) to Arriva Midlands.

■ CITY SIGHTSEEING, Purfleet

Dublin Olympian 90-D-1021 is now registered H871 PVW and allocated to Windsor. It will shortly be re-registered WLT 916.

Seville-based Metrobuses SE5947 (ex M45) and SE224 (ex M224) have been transferred to City Sightseeing Washington DC., together with Metrobus KYV 804X.

■ HERITAGE FLEET

Tiger Cub BCJ 710B has been sold to Alpine Coaches, Llandudno.

David Harman with thanks to Ross Newman of Ensignbus. LOTS

Other Operators

ARROW TAXIS, Maldon New here is Mercedes Benz 109CDI AU58 RYT.

BPH TRAVEL, Elmstead Market LDV 400 M867 FHU has been sold.

BROWNING, Westcliff LDV Convoy R643 AEG has been withdrawn.

CEDRIC, Wivenhoe Leyland Olympian/ECW C669 LJR has been sold.

CRUSADER HOLIDAYS, Clacton-on-Sea
A second Vauxhall Vivaro for shuttle/ferry work is DV58 HZC.

EXECUTIVE MINIBUS, Aveley New for use on ECC service 552 and Basildon area service 1A (Sats only) is small Solo EM09 BUS.

GENIAL TRAVEL, Gt Tey Further to last month, H140 AFV has passed to new operator Fizz Coach Trips, Great Tey.

HARDY MILES, Southend Ford Transit K2 KMK and MCW Metrobus LOA 413X have been sold. Mercedes Benz Sprinter MX05 NYN has been acquired.

HARWICH TAXIS, Dovercourt Ford Transit LN52 YOT has been reregistered H5 GUV. The previous H5 GUV a Mercedes Benz 412D has been reregistered to its original R253 JUM and sold.

JOHN JAMES, Coxtie Green A second Ford Transit GY52 OVW has been acquired.

LODGE, High Easter Further vehicles acquired from Pink Elephant, Stansted are

Optare Excel V118 LVH and Toyota/Caetano M121 SKY.

NCS, Widdington Renault Trafics sold are J508 XHK, K584/5 JWC, M526 AHJ.

A C ROSS, Witham Ford Transit AV06 KNY has been acquired. LDV Convoy minibuses sold are N811 JGT and W67 NTG. The latter to ECABS, Colchester (Non PSV).

RUFFLE, Sible Hedingham LDV Convoy P176 RFL has been acquired.

SAINT CLOUD, Rochford Vehicles sold are WIB 9498 (F679 BBD) a LAG Panoramic and Ford Transit D370 RVW.

SINNOTT, Molehill Green Recently acquired are LDV Convoy R41/2 BYG from Pink Elephant, Stansted (neither is in use at present) and M269 FNS a Mercedes Benz 709D/Onyx from Stansted Coach & Carriage, Birchanger.

SPECHT Abridge Scania K94/Irizar S360 SET has been sold to Vale (dealer), Gt Kingshill.

STANSTED AIRPORT CARZ, Stansted Airport Have started operating again; the only vehicles recorded thus far are VW Transporter NK08 VKK AND Ford Transits BJ07 XFH, BJ07 XGT.

STANSTED COACH & CARRIAGE, Birchanger Acquired is LDV 200 V883 MDA, which is currently out of use.

TURNERS, Little Maplestead Iveco 49-10/Marshall G148 GOL has been sold.
VICEROY, Saffron Walden Acquired from Awaydays, Ipswich is R111 WCS a Mercedes Benz 709D/Mellor.

YELLOW, Braintree LDV Convoy BV04 CZM has been sold

Ian Ransom, with thanks to the PSV Circle

City Sightseeing



Talisman Coachlines' former Colchester Olympians H47-9 MJN pictured together before open-top 49 departed for **Cyprus**. Atlanteans YNO 77S and YNO 78S also sailed for Cyprus on 3 May. All three will be used on the City Sightseeing Tour there.

The Colchester City Sightseeing Tour recommences on 23 May, using an ex-South Yorkshire Metrobus. For the 2009 season, it is reduced to three trips per day, and no longer serves Colchester Zoo.

Paul Smith

Transports of Delight ~ Memoirs of a Bus Anorak: 1940 to 2008 **by the Revd. Terry Challis**

Chapter 3 : part 2 : The Eastern National Years (1956 to 1959)

(The previous part of this story was in Essex Bus News issue 540, April 2009)

I do not feel qualified to write about other garages and so I will conclude this paragraph with some reflections and anecdotes which I hope are interesting. All my life I have been a political being although I have never been a member of a political party.

In my late childhood the nationalisation of the transport system was taking place under the Attlee government. This was something that as a child and teenager I fully agreed with and I still believe that there should be a high degree of public ownership, or at least control, if we are to ever have a good system of public transport. Anyway, I went to work at Eastern National as a naive teenager thinking that I would be working for a nationalised transport company. Of course it *was* nationalised: Eastern National was part of the Tilling Group which had been nationalised. However it seemed to me that it was *not* nationalised. As far as I could see, it was still run as a private Tilling Group company. Every other operator was treated as a rival. London Transport and British Railways were in the same camp as Moores of Kelvedon and Osbornes of Tollesbury, as far as Eastern National were concerned!

One incident sticks in my mind. The Traffic Assistant's section wanted to know what the wording was on London Transport's RFs that warned people not to stand by the driver. The clerk in the Traffic Assistant's section was sent to ride on an RF somewhere so as to find out!

One interesting distraction was occasionally to be sent to Chelmsford Bus Station to persuade a conductor to accept a large envelope of urgent crew duties to be taken to his or her home garage. I say "persuade" because it should have gone through the parcels office. Sometimes the walk was made in order to receive a parcel or

envelope.

During the 1958 bus strike it was realised that I would not be able to get to work at Chelmsford and thus I was told to report to the Southend office. Eastern National crews were on strike but Southend Corporation crews were still working. Rather than risk not getting on a Corporation bus as there were only two each hour each way (four in the peak) between Hadleigh and Southend for most of the day, I cycled to and from Southend. For me this experience was a real treat. For a week, at least, I would be working in the office that scheduled the buses that ran in my local area.

Southend Garage and Office scheduled its own buses and crews and also those of Hadleigh and Canvey Garages, except of course, for Southend Tylers Avenue. I was made very welcome by Gerry Neville, the Schedules Clerk, and given some general schedules work to do, such as copying graphs and writing up duties. It was a very enjoyable week. I was interested to note that the actual vehicle number for each car working was pencilled in at the side of the working. In the schedules that we prepared, we just scheduled the workings and it was up to the garage concerned to decide which actual vehicle was allocated to that particular car duty.

In May 1957, the new Central Works of Eastern National was opened. This was a big event and the office staff were allowed to use part of the canteen. This meant that we could see into the works and see what vehicles were receiving attention. The thing that struck me was the thoroughness with which the overhauls were carried out. Even pre-war vehicles were stripped down, refurbished and sent out as though they were new buses. There can be few operators these days that can still overhaul buses to such a high standard. Living in Blackpool now, I do know that Blackpool Transport continues to

do such work on buses and trams. One indication of the care that was taken at the works with the presentation of the buses was that before brand new buses were put into service, the black band which separated the cream from the green on the body was re-painted dark green.

Occasionally I had the opportunity to see files about services and this was very interesting and informative. However the sight of such files was frowned upon unless we had a direct need to see them. On one occasion I happened to see the records for the Lodekka (LD5G) based at Walton-on-Naze (I think it was 214BPU). The astonishing thing was that it was returning 17 miles per gallon: not bad for a 58-seat double-decker! What bus companies would give for such economy today: even in the 1950s, Eastern National was doing its bit for the environment!

Having said that Eastern National was run on frugal lines, there were occasional treats for the staff. One was in 1958 when a group of us made a Saturday visit to Eastern Coach Works at Lowestoft. We travelled on a

Chelmsford Bristol L6B with ECW "Queen Mary" body and were treated to lunch at an inn in Lowestoft. The visit was very interesting because we were able to see how the bodies were constructed and inspect vehicles destined for various parts of the United Kingdom including some LD6Gs for the Scottish Bus Group. They looked very nice in their very different liveries: different, that is, to the standard Tilling livery.

Another treat was that in 1958 the company decided to enter a re-bodied AEC Regal III of Tillings Transport in the Brighton Coach Rally. Eastern National had responsibility for the overall management and maintenance of Tilling Transport which operated as a coach company in London. This AEC had originally had a Windover body but had been re-bodied with an ECW "Queen Mary" body which had had an American style chromium plated grill grafted on to the front. I rather liked the Bristol "Queen Marys" with the exposed radiators and the later LL6Gs with enclosed radiators, of which Tilling Transport had a few (MXB 739-743), which were also quite nice, but this poor AEC was not a pretty sight!



The 1958 visit to ECW at Lowestoft. Terry Challis is on the extreme left. Terry Challis collection.



THE new Central Works of the Eastern National Omnibus Company Ltd. were opened at New Writtle Street, Chelmsford, earlier this month, by Mr. W. P. S. Ormond, Chairman of the Traffic Commissioners, Eastern Area. At these workshops will be carried out all major repairs and overhauls of the Eastern National fleet of nearly 700 buses and coaches, operating over a territory extending from the London area through Essex and parts of Hertfordshire to Ipswich. Express services are also operated as far north as Lowestoft and Yarmouth, and between East Anglia and certain south coast resorts.

The workshops have been laid out on progressive lines to minimise intermediate movement and handling. They have a capacity of 18 vehicles under heavy repair at one time, either single or double-deck, the company's fleet normally undergoing overhaul at intervals of 50,000 miles per vehicle. A staff of 150 will be employed at the workshops and special attention has been paid in the reconstruction scheme to the provision of adequate canteen and toilet facilities. The scheme has been carried out under the architectural supervision of Mr. A. A. Briggs, F.R.I.B.A., architect to the Tilling Association Ltd., the general contractors being F. R. Hipperston and Son Ltd.

As a result of development and the reconstitution of

the company's operating area, the previous Central Works, which had been in use for nearly 40 years and was originally built as a foundry, became out-of-date and uneconomic. Initial planning for the new works began in 1952, the original intention being to provide an extension to the existing building, but on closer investigation it became clear that from the dual aspects of economy and efficiency the right approach was to demolish the old works and to build a completely new structure surrounded by a carriageway.

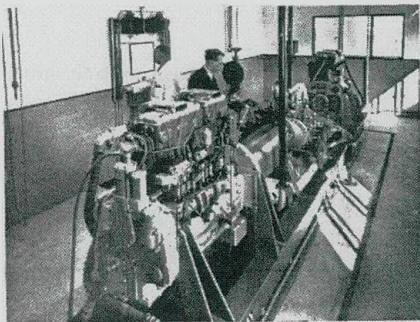
The old building was sited over an area comprising part of the two central bays of the proposed new building, and as the overhaul and repair of vehicles could not be interrupted, the building work had to be planned in two phases, the first being to build the two end bays and cleaning shop for occupation, and then to demolish the old building and erect the two centre bays. This did not conflict with the general layout, and work was arranged accordingly.

Works Design and Accommodation

The site on which the new works is built covers $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres. The building, which covers 46,000 sq. ft., is of steel frame construction with brick and asbestos cladding.



At the new Central Workshops at Chelmsford will be carried out all major repairs and overhauls of the Eastern National's fleet of nearly 700 buses and coaches. Left, the engine test shop (13c) with two Gardner diesel engines undergoing test, and, right, the engine overhaul shop with dock (3) in the background (3). The figures in brackets denote the position on the diagram



- ◀ *The opening of Eastern National's new Central Works in New Writtle Street at Chelmsford by the Chairman of the Eastern Traffic Commissioners, Mr W P S Ormond, was extensively covered by **Passenger Transport** in the May 15, 1957 edition. The works employed 150 staff and could accommodate 18 vehicles under heavy repair at a time; buses and coaches were overhauled every 50,000 miles.*

Anyway about twenty of us were invited to go with the coach to Brighton and stay at a hotel if we would clean and prepare the coach for the Concours d'Elegance. This was done at the Brighton and Hove Garage. We all played our part and had a very nice weekend. The AEC coach, however, did not win any prizes. [In contrast to the previous year, when Eastern National 429, 614JPU, a brand new Bristol LS coach had won the Lister Trophy at the 1957 Rally.]

By a great co-incidence, whilst this article was being edited, Peter Relf posted a photo of one of the five rebodied AEC Regal III's in the Tilling fleet to the Ceased Bus Operators internet group <http://groups.google.com/group/Ceased-Bus-Operators> and

subsequent e-mail exchanges established that this was the very coach that was entered in the 1958 Brighton Rally! The picture, taken somewhere in London, is reproduced with grateful thanks to Peter, who notes that it combined a 1949 chassis with a 1957 built ECW body to FC24F layout. © Peter Relf.

Earlier on in this chapter, I mentioned that one of the reasons that schedules clerks did not have direct contact with the garages was because of the sensitive relations with the Trade Unions and working practices. The kind of duty that a crew was prepared to work varied from garage to garage although most garages would accept a duty of eight hours in length plus a few minutes. However Chelmsford Garage was quite inflexible. The duties there had a length of seven hours and fifty minutes with only one or two going up to eight hours. There was also a local agreement that duties did not include more than three hours of town services.

Against this background of strong Trade Union input into the way that duties were compiled, it is all the more amazing that in my time at Eastern National one man operation (and it was one *man*!) and spread-



over duties (split shifts) were introduced. These achievements by "the powers that be" led by the General Manager, Mr. Richards, should be recognised for the feats of industrial diplomacy that they must have required.

If my memory serves me right, the first one man operators were at Southend Garage and involved the Wallasea Bay group of routes. They were worked by Bristol LS vehicles which had Setright ticket machines placed rather awkwardly on a bracket to the left and slightly behind the driver, so that he had to turn half-left each time he had to issue tickets. The position of the machine was later moved to a more sensible place on the driver's cab-door.

After the initial introduction of OMO buses, nearly every garage soon had one or two buses at least. Many were the newly introduced Bristol SC4LKs which seated 35 passengers. These were very neat vehicles

but I doubt if they would have won any prizes for acceleration and speed. Having said that, I notice that some Alexander-Dennis Darts a few years ago had engines not much bigger than SCs: no doubt they are turbo-charged!

One other matter of interest is that the City Coach take-over included the Brentwood Local services. These included Brentwood to Shotgate (253), to Ongar, Warley and Dunton Wayletts (all 260) as well as a Brentwood Town Service (252). However, with the assimilation of City operations into Eastern National operations, Brentwood Garage gained some work on the 30 (Chelmsford to London Bow) and the 40 (Chelmsford to Tilbury Ferry via Brentwood). This brought some interesting vehicles into the Chelmsford area.

One Saturday afternoon a friend from the Traffic Office and I went to Brentwood to have ride on the new prototype Routemaster



Typifying the move to one man operated saloons, a gleaming Bristol SC, 9578 F, poses at Brentwood Garage after service on the 260; note the Pay As You Enter sign. New in 1958 as 454, the same year that the two letter depot codes were introduced (BD in this case), it only lasted until mid 1964 and never received its intended new fleetnumber of 1011 in the 1964 scheme.

Richard Delahoy collection



CRL4 was tried on the 721 from 9th Oct to 29th Dec 1957. Here it is at Aldgate Minories, probably about to do its first run in service. Crew and inspector look on admiringly.

Douglas F Parker, courtesy Chris Stewart

coach which had an ECW body and Leyland engine (then numbered CRL4, later RMC4). This was in 1957. We waited patiently at the 721 Green Line stop until the Routemaster arrived. We decided that time only permitted a ride to Stratford. Thus we alighted at Stratford Broadway and found the EN Service 30 stop for a ride back to Chelmsford. Much to our delight, the vehicle which appeared was an ex-City Daimler CVD6 with Roberts low-bridge body of Brentwood Garage (from the NVX171-176 batch). When we left Stratford the bus was well filled and we had a smooth journey to Chelmsford.

Chelmsford Garage being the one nearest to Central Works had an allocation of float vehicles to cover for buses that had run into Chelmsford for repair and overhaul. Until they were needed (typically at weekends), Chelmsford used them on its own routes. Thus one evening I saw a Chelmsford driver on the Service30/40 Stand at Chelmsford Bus Station in the cab of a Brentwood Lodekka (LD6B). He was holding up six

fingers to a colleague and pointing to the bonnet to indicate that the bus had a six-cylinder engine: such was the novelty!

Another interesting and serious incident happened on the way home to Hadleigh on the 5.35pm 11A Service. We were travelling on the usual Southend Bristol KSW (of the UEV/UVX batch) and on the main road between Howe Green and Rettendon, the driver tried to overtake the vehicle in front. He must have misjudged the proximity of the off-side kerb and touched it. The bus, in a strange, slow almost graceful movement, turned onto its side and came to rest on the off-side verge. It is the only time that I have had to use the upstairs rear emergency exit door on a double-decker and I do not want to have to do so again! No one was seriously hurt. On the upper-deck we were fairly tightly packed together on the four person bench seats so that we could not move a lot anyway! This must have been in 1957 when fuel supplies were short because of the Suez Crisis. I seem to remember that Mr. Richards, the General Manager, was

travelling on this bus to his home in Southend. He was thus saving fuel by not using his company car.

In 1958 my father decided to go into semi-retirement and we moved to Holland-on-Sea, near Clacton. At the time British Railways was promoting the Clacton Branch as a good place from which to commute to London. The fares were very reasonable and the service was being speeded up with the introduction of "Britannia" Pacific locomotives. My father generously agreed to pay for my season ticket from Clacton to Chelmsford in order to facilitate the move. Coincidentally my interest in railways had been growing because from the office at New Writtle Street, we had a good view of the London to Norwich main line and I became fascinated by the procession of Britannias, B1s, B12s and B17s that we were able to see.

I had always had an interest in railways but there is no railway station at Hadleigh and my interest was only cultivated by the occasional trips from Leigh to London and the sight of trains on the LTS line as they crossed the marshes at Hadleigh and when we played as children at Hadleigh Castle. Sometimes we crossed the railway line at an uncontrolled level-crossing in order to walk to the sea-wall between Benfleet and Leigh-on-Sea. On other occasions we walked across "The Saddle-Bank" from Hadleigh Castle to Leigh Station and went on to enjoy a plate of cockles at the cockle sheds. There we could see the LTS trains close at hand.

After a year or so of commuting from Clacton to Chelmsford, it became clear that it was not fair to expect my father to continue to pay for my travel to work and I decided to look for other employment in the transport

industry. Eventually I answered an advertisement from British Railways for Traffic apprentices. I applied and was interviewed by Mr. Few, who was the Traffic Manager of the Great Eastern Line, and Mr. Rowett, the Head of Central Timing and Diagramming (C T and D). It was a good interview and, although I was not offered an apprenticeship, I was offered a post in C T and D. I gave Eastern National my resignation and duly left at the end of August 1959. However, before I left, I endured an uncomfortable interview with Mr. Bryan, the Traffic Manager, who clearly thought that I was being less than loyal as far as Eastern National was concerned. He pointed out that it was I who had approached them for a job and they could have reasonably expected more from me. Perhaps he had a point, but the fact was that I could no longer afford to work for them and my prospects there did not seem very bright both financially and career-wise.

Finally, I would like to record that I am grateful for my time at Eastern National. I learnt a lot, made some good friends and enjoyed my work very much indeed. I am also grateful to two Eastern National colleagues, Bob Beaumont and Ray Boreham, for jogging my memory and helping with some of the historical facts in this chapter.

Edited by Richard Delahoy, who supplied the photos.

We hope to hear more from Terry in future issues of EBN. Do you have memories of working on the buses in Essex that you could share with us? The Editor will always be pleased to hear from you!

Rear cover ~ Scania contrasts

NIBS ex-UniLink Scania YN04 YJR, now repainted and converted to single door. Kevin Smith

Stephensons new Olympus, now with vinyls applied, and seen working an NXEA Newbury Park rail replacement in Cranbrook Road, Ilford on Saturday 2 May. Russell Young



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The new X3 (Grays-Basildon-Brentwood-Ongar-Stansted) started on 1 May.

Unfortunately a serious road accident on the A13 and another one on the A128 meant that at least one afternoon journey was curtailed at Brentwood, but it did mean the coach used the new bus stop in the lay-by behind Barclays Bank in William Hunter Way. DAF/Van Hool YJ57 BTU is seen here.



Earlier the other one, Scania / Irizar RL04 EXL is seen passing the First London double decker off the 265 (Lakeside-Brentwood) which waits here every day from 14.50 until about 15.10.

Chris Stewart



YN08 MPE on the Marks Tey slip road off the A12, whilst on the Ipswich - Stansted airdirect service

Russell Young



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