

ESSEX BUS NEWS

Issue 539
March 2009



ESSEX BUS ENTHUSIASTS GROUP
www.essexbus.org.uk

Regal Busways

have a new MAN / Wright Meridian 801 (RG09 BUS) for the 16 (Chelmsford - Wethersfield) route.

front cover: 801 pulls into Victoria Road, Chelmsford.
Kevin Smith

right: awaiting late afternoon departure from Duke Street.

Russell Young



As recorded last month, NIBS now have some former Uni-Link (Minerva Accord) Scania. As yet unpainted YN04 YJT passes Billericay Rail Station on schooldays route 50.

Kevin Smith

Rail Replacement variety

bottom: Ensignbus former Metroline Olympian/Alexander 132 (S132 RLE) at Leigh Station on 22 February.

John G Lidstone



rear cover:

Lodges' former London and East Yorkshire Olympian G299 UYK at Chelmsford.

Kevin Smith

A regular performer on rail replacement work at Shenfield during January and February was this Volvo B12/Van Hool of Z&S, Aylesbury. The registration in fact gives a clue to its original owner, more noted for well kept lorries - Eddie Stobart Ltd.

Chris Stewart



Essex Bus News

Magazine Editor

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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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Dates for your diary

■ PRESS DATES

For inclusion in EBN dated

April

May

reports should reach Editors by

28 March

2 May

planned despatch date

16 April

21 May

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).

■ **AGM** - this was originally planned for March 9, but the notice was inadvertently omitted from February EBN, so it will now be held on **April 6** at Wickford, starting at 19:45. Doors will be open from 19:15, if not earlier, to give members adequate time to read the Accounts etc. The AGM will be followed by Owen Woodliffe's slide show.

■ SOUTH ESSEX MEETINGS

Venue: **Wickford Cricket Club, off Swan Lane, Wickford** - 5 minutes walk from Wickford Station and 5 minutes drive from the A130 and A127. In Wickford town centre, turn into Swan Lane from Runwell Road (Swans pub is on the corner); then turn right into the entrance about 100' up on the right - marked Wickford Tennis Club. This is an unmade road, so beware of potholes. Go straight ahead towards the tennis courts and then left at the

end - you will see the cricket clubhouse in front of you. Car parking available on site.

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

2009 programme

- ▶ **Monday April 6 - AGM** (starting at 1945), followed by slide show by *Owen Woodliffe* "To the Western Isles" - Great Britain and Vancouver.
(NB: this is the 1st Monday in the month, due to the Easter holidays)
- ▶ **Monday May 11** - at Freight House (the Committee Room), Rochford (our former venue) - modelling evening. Bring along your model buses to display.
- ▶ **Monday June 8** - evening visit to Stephensons of Rochford and local study tour. Further details nearer the time but please note we will meet off-site, not at the depot as there are no parking facilities there.
- ▶ **TUESDAY July 14** - provisional, to be confirmed - evening visit to the Castle Point Transport Museum (jointly with the Omnibus Society).
(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*

■ 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

- ▶ **Sunday April 5** - Day trip to **Cobham Bus Museum Spring Gathering** - pick up at Colchester North Station 08.00; Fare £20 inc entry. Phone 01621 857509 to book.
- ▶ **Friday April 17** [note: 3rd Friday **not** the 2nd] - *Robin Jenkinson*: Talk: "My Experiences in the Bus Industry in Essex in the 70's".
- ▶ **Friday May 8** - *Richard Delahoy*: "20 years ago - part 2".
- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **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

- ▶ **Saturday/Sunday 27-28 March** - London Transport Museum, Guided Tours at Acton Depot.
- ▶ **Sunday April 5** - **Cobham Annual Open Day and Bus & Coach Gathering**, London Bus Preservation Trust, Wisley Airfield, with bus services to Cobham Museum and Weybridge Station. The traditional start to the rally season. See above for coach excursion from Colchester.

- ▶ **Saturday/Sunday April 12-13 - Romford area Running Day** (routes 175a, 247 and 339), 30th anniversary of the end of RT operation, with London Bus Company and Ensignbus RTs in service. See timetable on next two pages. Note: this event is still subject to final TfL approval, so details may vary. www.thelondonbuscompany.co.uk
- ▶ **Sunday April 13 : Easter Bus Event** (60th Anniversary of ECOC Bristol K & L, and Bedford OB), Ipswich Transport Museum, Suffolk.
- ▶ **Sunday April 18 : Transport in Miniature**, Ipswich Transport Museum, Suffolk.
- ▶ **Saturday/Sunday 24-25 April - London Transport Museum, Guided Tours at Acton Depot.**
- ▶ **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 7. www.envoc.org.uk
- ▶ *Please note: details of rallies etc. are published in good faith, and we can only 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 April 5: Cobham Annual Open Day and Bus & Coach Gathering:**
See under North Essex Meetings for coach excursion from Colchester.
- ▶ **Sunday June 23: Evening visit to Talisman** - See under North Essex Meetings.

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 x £1.70; i.e. £17.

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

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

Replacements for missing or defective EBNs are available from Richard.

TIMETABLE SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

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

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

PUBLICATION SALES

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

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

BLACK & WHITE PHOTO SALES

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

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

lyn@barrons-bds.com

175A Romford to Ongar via Collier Row and Stapleford Abbotts

Romford Station, Stop Z	0918	1118	1218	1418	1518	1618
Romford Market, Stop H	0923	1123	1223	1423	1523	1623
Romford Parkside Hotel	0926	1126	1226	1426	1526	1626
Collier Row Clockhouse Lane	0934	1134	1234	1434	1534	1634
North Romford Chase Cross	0937	1137	1237	1437	1537	1637
Haverling Green	0941	1141	1241	1441	1541	1641
Stapleford Abbotts Royal Oak	0944	1144	1244	1444	1544	1644
Passingford Bridge	0950	1150	1250	1450	1550	1650
Ongar Two Brewers	1001	1201	1301	1501	1601	1701
Ongar Station	1003	1203	1303	1503	1603	1703
Ongar Station	1024	1124	1224	1424	1524	1724
Ongar Two Brewers	1026	1126	1226	1426	1526	1726
Passingford Bridge	1037	1137	1237	1437	1537	1737
Stapleford Abbotts Royal Oak	1043	1143	1243	1443	1543	1743
Haverling Green	1046	1146	1246	1446	1546	1746
North Romford Chase Cross	1050	1150	1250	1450	1550	1750
Collier Row Clockhouse Lane	1053	1153	1253	1453	1553	1753
Romford North Street Bus Garage	1101	1201	1301	1501	1601	1801
Romford Market	1104	1204	1304	1504	1604	1804
Romford Station	1109	1209	1309	1509	1609	1809

247 Romford to Brentwood via Gidea Park and Harold Wood

Romford Market, Stop G	0908		1238	1338		1708
Romford Station, Stop Y	0913	and	1243	1343	and	1713
Gidea Park Station	0921	every	1251	1351	every	1721
Harold Wood Squirrels Heath Rd	0929	30	1259	1359	30	1729
Warley Thatchers Arms	0940	mins	1310	1410	mins	1740
Brentwood Station	0946	until	1316	1416	until	1746
Brentwood High Street	0951		1321	1421		1751
Brentwood Robin Hood & L. John	0954		1324	1424		1754
Brentwood Robin Hood & L. John	1005		1335	1435		1805
Brentwood High Street	1008	and	1338	1438	and	1808
Brentwood Station	1013	every	1343	1443	every	1813
Warley Thatchers Arms	1020	30	1349	1449	30	1819
Harold Wood Squirrels Heath Rd	1031	mins	1400	1500	mins	1830
Gidea Park Station	1039	until	1408	1508	until	1838
Romford Station, Stop V	1047		1416	1516		1846
Romford Market, Stop H	1051		1421	1521		1851

339 Brentwood to Epping via Ongar and North Weald

Brentwood Station	0950		1250	1450		1750
Brentwood High Street	0955		1255	1455		1755
Brentwood Robin Hood & L. John	0958		1258	1458		1758
Pilgrims Hatch Rose & Crown	1001	and	1301	1501	and	1801
Kelvedon Hatch Post Office	1008	every	1308	1508	every	1808
Ongar Two Brewers	1014	60	1314	1514	60	1814
Ongar Station	1017	mins	1317	1517	mins	1817
Ongar Four Wantz	1019		1319	1519		1819
Tylers Green The Talbot	1025		1325	1525		1825
North Weald Kings Head	1029		1329	1529		1829
Epping Church	1039		1339	1539		1839
Epping Station	1042		1342	1542		1842
Epping Station	0948		1348	1548	1648	1748
Epping Church	0951		1351	1551	1651	1751
North Weald Kings Head	1001		1401	1601	1701	1801
Tylers Green The Talbot	1005		1405	1605	1705	1805
Ongar Four Wantz	1012	every	1412	1612	1712	1812
Ongar Station	1014	60	1414	1614	1714	1814
Ongar Two Brewers	1017	mins	1417	1617	1717	1817
Kelvedon Hatch Post Office	1023	until	1423	1623	1723	1823
Pilgrims Hatch Rose & Crown	1030		1430	1630	1730	1830
Brentwood Robin Hood & L. John	1033		1433	1633	1733	1833
Brentwood High Street	1036		1436	1636	1736	1836
Brentwood Station	1041		1441	1641	1741	1841

**COMMEMORATE
30 YEARS
LAST RT TY
WITHDRAWN
LONDON.**



**ROUTE
175A, 247
12-13 APRIL**



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AND 339**

RIL 2009



information,
1474 361199
visit
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Bus Company,
ent, DA11 9SN



On 7 April 1979, the last London Transport RT type bus run into Barking Garage, ending 40 years of the type's service to the capital.

To commemorate the 30th anniversary, the London Bus Company (in conjunction with Ensignbus) will operate RTs* on three bus services on Sunday 12 April and Monday 13 April 2009.

A feeder service will operate to and from central London (separate fares are charged) connecting with routes 175A and 339 at Ongar. Further information and how to book, can be found at www.tclbs.org.

Ongar railway station will be open on both days, and visitors will be able to view the progress being made towards the re-opening of the line towards Coopersale.

'Golden Phoamer' tickets valid for unlimited travel on all three services will be available from conductors :
Adult 1 day - £6, Child 1 day £3, Adult 2 day - £10,
Child 2 day £5. Single fares also available.

**Operation of RT type vehicles is subject to availability.*



RT days in Brentwood and district

RT4650 pulls onto the High Street stand on the 247 on 14 February 1976. Wilson's Corner crossroads in pre-mini-roundabout days in background. Note 'coke-bottle' shape MkII Cortina to rear; also EN enquiry office on left, second shop down from Ongar Road, just behind the traffic signal.

RT2504 in London Country livery (with 'flying polo mint' logo) waits at Ongar (Two Brewers) en route for Harlow. BD 'tram' (MW) behind on the 261 (Ongar - Brentwood via Ongar Station, the Four Wantz and Blackmore).

Chris Stewart





Clacton Running Day



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SUNDAY JUNE 7TH

**FEEDER BUSES FROM SOUTHEND, 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



Service Changes

Arriva East Herts & Essex

1 Apr 09	521	Sat	Brentwood to North Weald Market service withdrawn.
	523	Sat	Loughton to North Weald Market service withdrawn.
12 Apr 09	2	M-S	Harlow to Staple Tye revised timetable.
	3	M-S	Harlow to Staple Tye revised timetable.
	10	D	Harlow to Church Langley revised timetable.

Ensign

28 Mar 09	22	D	Grays to Aveley revised timetable/
	73	D	Lakeside to Tilbury revised timetable.
	83	M-S	Lakeside to Chadwell St Mary revise timetable.

First Essex

16 Feb 09	21	D	Black Notley to Halstead amendment to route.
6 Apr 09	21	D	Southend to Canvey amendment to timetable.

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

Publicity News

Essex County Council A5 Bus Times leaflet for Village Link 5 (Saffron Walden to Bishops Stortford) dated 2.11.08

Thurrock Public Transport Map, published by Thurrock Council dated January 2009

First leaflets for 21 (including 352) from 1st February 2009; 131/2 from 2nd February 2009

Ian Ransom with thanks to LOTS

First

■ FIRST ESSEX BUSES LTD

Company Changes

First Group have proposed that the *First Eastern Counties* and *First Essex* businesses are to merge under a combined management team headed by Alan Pilbeam, recently appointed MD of FEC. Bob Dorr, MD of First Essex, has been asked to undertake a range of special projects and we wish him well in his new role. No other details have yet emerged about the joint operation but we at EBN understand that this is obviously a difficult time for all the staff at both locations.

New and acquired vehicles

69434 EU58JWZ Volvo B7RLE Wright (probably B44F but to be confirmed)

Expected soon are four new ADL Dart/Enviro 200 for Harwich (DT), displacing the Primos and two Solos. Also due are four MPD Darts (43845-8) from *First Hampshire & Dorset* for Basildon, whereupon the Solos there will revert to CF. The company has bid internally for a considerable number of *First London* Tridents and DT will be amongst the recipients later in the year, completing its conversion to a fully low floor depot.



Chris Stewart's view from above

Carrying Aircoach livery, Plaxton Cheetah 56009 (EY54BRZ) was working as a crew shuttle on 27 February 2009 although it had clearly worked an early 351 to Warley and back. Duke Street, Chelmsford.

Recently transferred from the Ipswich Park & Ride, Volvo B7RLE/Wright 66799 (MX05CCD) is seen from Chelmsford railway station on 27 February 2009.



Allocation changes

Period 11: 25th January 2009 to 21st February 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; [*=on paper only]

42439 BE-HH; 42482 CF-BE; 42937 CF-DT; 43715 CR-HH; 43716 CF-HH; 43729 CF-HH; 43730 CF-HH; 43731 CF-HH; 43739 CR-HH; 43800 DT-BN; 46122 HH-RES; 46137 HH-D/L(D); 46138 HH-D/L(D); 46140 HH-D/L(D); 46141 HH-D/L(D); 46142 HH-D/L(D); 46146 HH-D/L(D); 46147 HH-D/L(D); 46173 HH-D/L(D); 46806 CN-D/L(D); 46811 BN-BE (shuttle)*; 46812 BN-D/L(D); 47219 CF-D/L(D); 51803 BE-BN; 61054 BN-CR; 61057 BN-CR; 65675 BN(HH)-CR; 66794 FGC-CF; 66795 FGC-CF; 66797 FGC-CF; 66798 FGC-CF; 66799 FGC-CF; 66800 FGC-BN; 66813 FGC-BN; 69434 new-CF

Further Company list covering period 22nd to 28th February 2009

42487 CF-BE; 43732 BN-HH; 43733 BN-HH; 43734 BN-HH; 43735 BN-HH; 43737 CN-HH; 43738 CN-HH; 43740 CR-CN; 43741 CR-CN; 43742 CR-BN; 43743 CR-BN; 43744 CR-BN; 46127 D/L(D)-sold; 46136 HH-D/L(D); 46148 HH-D/L(D); 46149 HH-D/L(D); 46143 D/L(D)-sold; 46806 D/L(D)-sold; 46811 BE-BN*; 46812 D/L(D)-sold; 47221 CN-sold; 65672 BN-CR; 65673 BN-CR; 65674 BN-CR; 65677 BN-CR; 65678 BN-CR; 66796 FGC-CF; 66801 FGC-BN; 66803 FGC-BN; 66804 FGC-BN; 66805 FGC-BN; 66806 FGC-BN

46148/9 are due to be loaned to First Eastern Counties at Ipswich. 46138/86 remained in use at CN on 23rd February, with 46186 on loan to DT as March started. 46826 was working from CR. FEC Olympian 34873 (F173LBL) was noted in Clacton disposal yard on 20th February but is not for further use.



51803 (P403 HPU) is a surprising recipient of an LED display. Basildon; February.

Kevin Smith

Disposals

Period 10: With reference to EBN538, sale and disposal of 46819 should read 46822

Late February 2009: 46127 46143 46806 46812 47221 all to Erith Commercials for scrap

Repaints (period 11):

67004 40734 41640 43717 67005 42918 46158 67007

Area News - workings and sightings:

Clacton & Harwich (DT)

DT had Scania 65675 (now at CR, ex BN but latterly at HH for trials) on loan from 1st-11th February, and as at 10th Feb also had CR34014/5, CN47102 and CF53124 on loan. Their own 53138 was still away for repair at Unitec, 65652 remains out of use awaiting parts and 34280 was at Volvo Ipswich for engine repairs. 31377 and 34282 had returned to service, whilst Dart SLF 42937 arrived from CF on 15th and was in service on Village Link 3 and 4 by 18th. Other loans to DT have been CR34305 and 46186.

Road works affected the 103/104 and required a Lawford shuttle, intended to be Varios 52584/5 but only 52584 was seen together with Dart 46122.

On Weds 25th Feb, (RES)46132 failed between Frinton and Walton on the 07.30 service 8 from Clacton and was substituted by CR43739 (transferred the following weekend to HH). This then worked on routes 7/8/8A all day starting with the 09.37 WN-CN and then the 10.30, 12.00, 13.30, 15.00, 16.30 and 18.00 from WN and corresponding return journeys. This may well have been the first daytime low floor working on these routes (evening ECC and Sunday Hedingham journeys are LF).

Volvo CR66817 was at CN for most of February, exchanged with Scania CR65691.

Colchester

On 5th February there were delays to 71 during the afternoon owing to a collision at Kelvedon, High St/New Rd junction. On 17th, 75s were diverted in Tiptree (via Barb Brook Road) because of a burst water main in the High Street.

East Gates level crossing, Colchester was closed for maintenance on 28th Feb and 1st Mar; routes 62, 74, 76, 103/4 were diverted via Ipswich Road and St Andrews Ave, with 62, 74 additionally using Harwich Road to regain route. Also in late Feb/early March, Hythe Station Road level crossing was closed for maintenance; routes 64/A diverted via Hawkins Road and Haven Bridge, with a shuttle taxi running between each side of the level crossing.

February

3rd 66795/9 in bus station, 66797 on 65

6th CF60104 and CR66813 on 70

9th CR65653 on 67 (evening), 66800 on 70

13th (RES)52584 on Maldon 75, 66800 on 70

16th (RES)52584 on Lawford shuttles

20th 66794/5, 66800 all still in CR together with (RES)46122.

21st CR67007 on 70, CR43744 on 88 (07.40 ex HD) and CR66811 on 88 (20.40 ex CR), CR62408 on X22

24th CR20110 and CF34818 on Manningtree-Billericay rail replacement

26th CR34056 on 65, CR34307 on 70

28th CR34310, DT65650/1 and CR67006/11 all on 65, CR47104 on 76, CR65654 on 66 and CR66815 on 71, CR61054 on 88 (08.40 ex HD)

March

4th CR65673 on 71

Chelmsford & Braintree

February

2nd CF53121 on 351 and CF53123 on 42

4th BE42485 on 42, 66798 (pres on delivery from IPS) at Lt Waltham, CR34013 on 70

- 6th CF66798 on 70
- 7th CF66800 on 70
- 9th BE47101 on 351, CF66830 on 42
- 10th CF66798 on 70 [negotiating parked vehicles with difficulty on bridge at Little Waltham as volunteers fought to stop cottages being flooded]
- 11th CF42918 (42) on BE509
- 12th CF53119 on CF30
- 14th CF66795 (still with Ipswich P & R logos) on 70 and CF47228 on 42
- 16th CF66797 on 351, CF66800 on 70 and CF66799 on 33
- 17th Solo CF53119 on 33, CF66796 seen in service on 36
- 18th CF66799 on 36 (09.41 ex SW)
- 19th CF66800 and CF66837 on 36
- 20th CF65680/2 and CF66799 on 36, CF69434 newly in service on 31 and the 70 (10.30 ex CF, replacing 66813)
- 21st CF42487 and CF43730 on 36
- 22nd CF65680 on 36
- 23rd CF60104 on 36X (07.29 ex SW), CF31198 on 36 (07.35 ex SW) & CF65681 on 36
- 24th CF65680 and CF66837 on 36
- 25th CF42927 on 36, CF42931 on BE21
- 26th CF60103 on 36 (07.35 ex SW), BE42483 on 36 (13.41 ex SW), BE40738 on 33, BE47101 on 45, CF65682 on 48, CR66812 and CF66818 on 70, BE53119 on 21 then 132, CF53136 on BE21
- 27th CF65681 on 36 (06.40 ex CF)
- 28th CF65680 on 36 (09.11 ex SW), CF65683 on 36 (14.41 ex SW)
- March
- 3rd (RES)46826 on 351, CF47229 on 45
- 5th Lance CF60104 on 31

Basildon & Hadleigh

Volvos made some appearances on the 100 during the week commencing 24th February, but took over in force the following week. To help judge the changes, more extensive sightings from 3rd/4th are given below (like much of the regular BN reporting, courtesy of Nigel Clark).

February

- 2nd BN46811 on 73 (and again on 9th)
- 5th BN43742 on 25A
- 6th BN61054 on 8A, BN67012 on 22
- 9th BN46148 on 21, BN67002/36 on 22
- 10th BN41640 on 73, BN41645 on 100
- 11th BN52585 still in use on 73, Solo BN53166 on 200, BN41640 & BN61054 on 8/8A, BN66824 on 100, BN67012 on 22,
- 12th BN31373 on 22, BN43732 (5) unusually actually on 5, 52584 on 1/1A, 52585 on 25B, BN61054/7 on 8/8A, BN65626 (8) back in service on 100, 66816 in yard
- 13th BN65628 on 100
- 14th BN43733 on 100, FEC 43485 (R485CAH) in for MOT
- 16th BN67009 on 100
- 18th BN31375 on 100
- 19th BN34012 on 25B, BN41647 on 100
- 21st BN34012 on 22, BN67001 on 100, BN65676 (100) on 8A
- 24th BN51803 on 552
- 26th HH41009 on 25, HH43736 on 2, BN51803 on 1, BN67013 on 12, BN66800/19/26/7 on 100
- 27th HH42855 and HH43732 (5) on 22, HH43715 on 21
- March

- 2nd BN43742 on 551, HH43738 on 21, HH43714 on 2, BN46815 on HH24
- 3rd Volvos 66800/3/4/5/13/21/3/5/7 all used on 100 together with 65629 (8). 51803 was on 1A, 43714 on 2, 41644/51 and 65665/7/71 on 5, 65669 on 8, 43737 on 22, 46826 and 67036 on 25, 46827 on 551.
- 4th Volvos 66801/3/5/23/7 and Scania 65671 on 100, plus Dart 46172 at lunchtime and SLF 43742 p.m. Service 5 had a mixture of Scania (65667/9/70) and Volvo (66821/2), with Dart 46828 later substituting. Service 8 was Scania plus Volvo 66826. Merc 51803 on 1A, 43732 (5) and 43735 on 2, Lances 67009/36 on 25 and SLF Darts 43743/4 on 25B with Dart 46811 on 200.

Other News

Former ENOC/First Essex vehicles

Abus of Bristol XHK221X once again worked their Wednesdays only 791 to Weston super Mare on 4th March.

Olympian 34809 (C409HJN) moved to the former Truronian depot of First Devon & Cornwall but was withdrawn in February with a number of major defects after only a short period of time in use. Varios R417/8VPU remain in use there.

Sources: Own observations, with many thanks to *First Essex* and to A Bird, R Clark, T Clark, J Collins, D Edwards, M Farmer, N Mansfield, K Mead, A Nugent, J Podgorski, D Pretty, I Ransom, J Salmon, C Sigston, 'Solo', R Thompson, A Timms, 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.buslistsontheweb.co.uk, *Real Bus News*, LOTS, PSV Circle, *Bristol VR South West Bus News* (<http://www.gocities.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 EAST HERTS & ESSEX Limited

Allocations

1/09: 2175/376/7.w; 3100/357.u; 3417/8/828.HA;
2/09: 2185.w; 3483.HA

Subsequent histories

2158 (N366 JGS): Pickford, Chippenham 6/08 ex Birchall & Steed, Whitstable
2163 (P438 HKN): Birchall & Steed, Whitstable 9/08 ex Pickford, Chippenham
3332/3 (F 62/3 SMC): Edwards, Llantwit Fadre by 1/09 ex Gregory, Beddau, South Wales
3365 (L415 NHJ): gone from Arriva The Shires 3365
3377/8 (M267/8 VPU): Trustybus, Harlow 2/09 via Ensign, Pufleet (dealer) ex Arriva The Shires 3377/8

Mark Garrett

■ ARRIVA SOUTHEND Limited.

General

Courtesy of Matthew Arnold, Arriva Southern Counties Business Development Manager, Essex Bus News is able to report that the following vehicles are expected at Southend shortly:

Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton 3172 (N234TPK) & 3276-81 (T276-81JKM)



Southend Olympians - (1) newly received, (2) newly departed, and (3) long gone

(1) Latest double deck additions to the Arriva Southend fleet are four Volvo Olympians with Northern Counties bodies. Here 5936, P936MKL, leaves Southend Travel Centre on service 1 on January 24, shortly before the route was converted to all low floor single deck operation and cut back to terminate at the Renown in Shoeburyness. The Blackgate Road destination display is now redundant. Richard Delahoy

(2) 5892, just after withdrawal (21 February) before going to Colchester. John G Lidstone





(3) A reminder that Southend Transport had five very similar Volvo Olympians to 5934-7, delivered new in 1996 in British Bus days; a very new 707, N707TPK, resplendent in the blue and white ST livery, turns at the Renown at Shoeburyness in the period when ST ran a through service from Shoebury to Basildon. They were withdrawn in 2004 and transferred to Arriva North West & Wales. Richard Delahoy

3276- 81 are 10.6 m Pointer 2s currently allocated to Dartford for TfL route 428. These will be repainted out of TfL red into corporate livery. 3172 is to 10.1m length and is currently at Maidstone. Compensatory withdrawals at Southend are expected to be Dart/ East Lincs 3007, 3008, 3122 and 3123, Dart/Northern Counties 3132 and 3154, and Dart/Plaxton 3175.

Vehicles in

From Gillingham

3409/10 (P329/30 HVX) Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer B34F
new 10/1996 to County Bus and Coach.

Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton 3086 (P286 FPK) and DAF SB220/Plaxton 3916 (T916 KKM) reported as destined for Southend in EBN536 have now arrived and are in service.

Vehicles Out

Olympian/ Alexander 5089, 5090 and Olympian/Northern Counties 5892 have been withdrawn and have passed to Burtons of Haverhill. Olympian/ Alexander 5392 has been transferred to Arriva Scotland.

Correction to EBN538

The correct fleetnumbers for the four Volvo Olympians/Northern Counties (P934-7 MKL) now at Southend are 5934-7.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Matthew Arnold and Richard Delahoy

Network Colchester

Vehicles in

From Linkline

302 (Y292 PDN) Optare Solo B31F

305 (Y295 PDN) Optare Solo B27F

Vehicles Out

802 Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer (M722 CGO) to Flight Delay, Manchester Airport

803 Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer (M723 CGO) withdrawn due to accident damage received whilst working route 731 in late January.

The last step entrance Dart left in the fleet is East Lancs bodied 806 (M526 MPM).

Vehicles News and Workings

Optare Solo (300) W427 CWX was fitted with an LED destination display in mid February.

Heavy snowfall on 2nd February disrupted services with a limited service running until lunchtime.

On 17 February there was a temporary diversion of route 8 in the Highwoods area, caused by emergency roadworks at the Brinkley Road/Gavin Way junction. Buses were diverted via Severalls Lane.

An extra bus is now needed for the Grampian Country Foods contract, bringing the total required to three double deckers.

Rail Replacement

Sunday 15 February

Newbury Park to Ingatestone - Scania Omnidekka/Olympus 101-4 and Dart SLF 527

Colchester to Clacton/Walton - DAFs 133/282 and Trident 156

Sunday 22 February

Witham to Billericay - Omnidekka 102 and Tridents 155/6

Colchester to Clacton /Walton - Dart SLFs 513, 520, 521, 523, 528

Friday 6 March

Colchester to Ipswich - 155, 204, 302, 366.

Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Richard Delahoy and John Podgorski

Ensignbus

DEALER STOCK MOVEMENTS

Vehicles in

from

Arriva the Shires: Darts N133 XND, K448 XPA.

Dublin Bus: Olympians 97-D-348/360/1/3/5/20393/4/5.

Go-Ahead London: Tridents PO51 UMF/S/T/W/Y/V.

Go-Ahead North East: Spectra K311 FYG.

Lothian Buses: Open top Routemasters CUV 210C, 863 DYE, 858DYE, WLT371. Closed top NMY634/46E and RMC1485; Leyland PD2 LST 873, Leyland PS1s YSL 334 and OAS624, Olympian A158 FPG

Metroline: DLD25/39/49/50/65/66 and MPD Y962 KRX.

Stagecoach East: Olympians H139/40/9/51/2 GGS, A978 OST,

B898 UAS.
Stagecoach Manchester: Olympian M790 NBA.
Western Greyhound: Olympians G804 SMV H807 XMY.

Vehicles out

Dominator H133 GVM:	Abbey Travel , Hull.
Dublin Olympians 97-D-326/7/8/30	now P516 / 529 / 481 / 536 SWC with Acklams Coaches , Beverley, East Yorks.
Volvo B6s M680 SSX L645 OWY:	ACL Travel , Hewish, Somerset.
Olympians G230/2 VWL:	Alpine Coaches , Llandudno.
Dart M460 LLJ:	A & P Brown , Ely, Cambs.
Dart MPD Y962 KRX:	Carters Coaches , Ipswich.
Solos S248/9/50/2/5 KNL:	CumfyBus , Southport.
Metroriders T553/4/ 6SDN:	Devon Road Ltd , Strood, Kent.
Olympian G293 UMJ:	Eastonways , Ramsgate, Kent.
Olympian G213 SSL:	Johnsons , Hodthorpe.
Scania's J133 HMT K855/6/63/5/8/70 LMK, Olympians J925 FPS, SJI 4558 and Spectra K311 FYG:	MASS (Brightbus), Sheffield.
Volvo D10Ms F124 PHM G647 SGT:	McKindless , Wishaw.
Dublin Olympians 97-D-331/333	now P548/52 SWC with Pikes Coaches , Andover, Hants.
Dart M91 WBW:	Regal Busways , Chelmsford.
Olympians F289/95/98:	Stephensons Coaches , Easingwold.
Excel P443 SWX:	Tates Travel , Barnsley.
Dublin Olympian 96-D-10320	now P467 SWC with Warrington Transport .
Tridents W589/9 GCW:	Western Greyhound , Newquay.

Scania H465 GVM: **SCI Evans**, Tignes, France.

■ ENSIGNBUS

Former Blue Triangle Tridents V901/3 FEC have been temporarily added to the fleet as extra buses to cover DLR work recently taken over from Fraser Eagle.

Olympian P482 MBY has been re-registered 392 MBF and numbered 152.

Dart 783 has been sold to TWH Travel for a bingo contract.

■ HERITAGE FLEET

RMC1485 and open top RM371 have been acquired ex Lothian Buses, together with one Cummins-engined RMA. AEC engined RMA58 is now available for sale.

David Harman with thanks to Ross Newman of Ensignbus

Excel Passenger Logistics

Acquired in September, but not previously reported is Mercedes Benz 0814D/Plaxton S553 BNV.

Olympian/East Lancs KTL 43Y has been sold for scrap. It had been stored at Stephensons, Witham depot.

Ian Ransom

National Express

New vehicle by 2/09:

LK58 GUE Mercedes-Benz Citaro (artic) - in orange/yellow livery
- for use on Stansted car park shuttles.

Liveries

LK53 KWD to new NatEx livery by 2/09. D302 has lost all NatEx fleetnames/branding, and now just has Driver Training lettering.

John Podgorski

Regal Busways

New for service 16 (Chelmsford to Wethersfield) is MAN / Wright Meridian RG09 BUS. Dennis Dart/Plaxton L110 HHV acquired from Nelsons, some months ago, has entered service here.

Ian Ransom

Stephensons of Essex

LDV Convoy DL03 HDK is here, for crew ferry work. Former First coaches P20 GRT and P26 RFS are unlikely to be kept and were parked up at Rochford depot in mid-February.

To correct EBN538, C174/6 ECK were the last ECW lowheight vehicles in the fleet. Several lowheight Alexander bodied vehicles remain.

Vehicles sold are OFS 683Y Leyland Olympian/Alexander to Lawtons Coaches, Lincolnshire and Volvo B10M/N Counties G642 BPH has been sold to Kent Coach Travel, Sheerness.

Ian Ransom with thanks to Lyn Watson

Trustybus

Acquired are Dennis Lance SLF/Wright M267/8 VPU from Arriva the Shires, they were new to Arriva at Harlow. Optare Excels P501/4/6/8 OUG have gone to Coachlease (dealer), former Chester Dart/Plaxton L63 SFM has departed to Jersey. Similar K58/9 LLG and K92 BNY have been withdrawn.

Ian Ransom

Other operators

A&K MINIBUSES, Shotgate Ford Transit L75 BAY is back in use.

AMBER, Rayleigh Acquired from Tates Travel, Barnsley is Volvo B10M/Caetano D19 LOM (new as CL51 LEE).

APT COACHES, Rayleigh M308 VET a Scania K113/Van Hool has been sold.

BROWNS OF BASILDON, Crays Hill Acquired from P&M, Crays Hill are Leyland Olympian/Alexander J849 TSC and Volvo B10M/Van Hool M592 COR. DAF 200 minibus L571 GKO has been sold

CEEFA COACHES, Thundersley Acquired from P&M, Crays Hill is Leyland Olympian/Alexander J846 TSC.

CHARIOTS, Stanford-le-Hope Recently acquired is LDV Convoy DK03 OYT. MCW Metrobus A629 BCN has been sold to a private owner in East Sussex.

COUNTY, Brentwood Dennis Javelin/Duple F879 RFP has been sold to Jarvis Coaches, Aberdare.

CRUSADER, Clacton-on-Sea Setra S315GT EK51 KZC has been sold to Jim Hughes, Sunderland.

DE VERE CARS, Sible Hedingham New is Renault Trafic EJ08 OFO (non PSV).

ED'S, East Tilbury Iveco minibus P768 JKL has been acquired.

HARDY MILES, Rochford MCW Metrobus F761 EKM has been re-registered BIG 8752, while the former BIG 8752 has been registered back to ORJ 91W, although it is currently withdrawn without plates at the depot.

HIBBERD, Harlow This operator has moved to Hertfordshire, so will no longer be covered here. Iveco/Stanford FX51 GJY was the only vehicle owned.

KNIGHTS COACHES, Gt Braxted LDV Convoy R478 HEW has been sold.

L&R TRANSPORT, Basildon Acquired is A501 OKH a Volvo B10M/Duple. Scania K114/Irizar L4 GPD (FL03 FAL) has been sold.

LINKFAST, Thundersley DAF/Northern Counties P318 KTW has been sold to Winson, Loughborough. Bristol VR/ECW VCA 458W survives here, but only as a storehoused.

LODGE, High Easter Mercedes Benz Touro

BG58 OLO is a new addition to this fleet. Bedford YMT/Duple XNM 820S has been withdrawn.

M&E, Rochford Both Bristol VRs have been sold, SNV 934W has gone for preservation, while GTX 750W has been sold for non-PSV use. Leyland Olympian/ECW C205 GTU has been acquired

MELS MINIBUS, Horndon on the Hill Ford Transit EK57 ZDP was new here in 2007, although not previously reported.

MILESTONE, Canvey Island Mercedes Benz 0814D/Autobus T350 EJM was sold to Holloway (dealer), Willenhall in December.

NCS, Widdington Recently acquired are LDV Convoy R35/98 KAR T332/43 VJN W609 XDM X658/659/663/673/712 CNO EK51 YGF/YKF/YPT EG02 NKA EJ52 UKA/UKZ/UUA FN03 HYM EN53 MHK KJ53 AJX FJ05 HGK FX05 GXS/GXU YX05 EFH LJ55 YUX, Renault Trafic T975 LBV W573 BCW X817 JFR, Iveco T184 SFW and Ford Transit NC03 YVA. New some time ago and not reported is Ford Transit EX06 CFL. (All are non PSV).

NEW HORIZON, Frating Iveco 50C13 minibus OV02 WCX has been sold to Hotline Cars, Walsall.

OLYMPIAN/SM TRAVEL, Harlow Recently acquired are Dennis Dart SLF/Caetano KU02 YBD/F, they were new to Mitcham Belle. Please delete the report on the acquisition of Iveco/Beulas T288/90 CGU as being here, this was an incorrect report.

P&L MINIBUS, Colchester A further vehicle here is AF51 JXP a LDV Convoy (Non PSV).

RAYNHAM, Great Sampford No longer has a PSV licence, although taxis are still operated. Ford Transit KR05 OGJ was here.

RELIANCE, Bowers Gifford Scania L94/Van Hool T90 ASH has been sold. Scania K310/Irizar YN07 EZA has been acquired.

RICHARDS, Chelmsford Mercedes Benz 0814D/Plaxton EU54 BKK has been sold to Carousel Travel, Hornsey.

ROSIES, Muckingford New in 2007 and not previously reported is Ford Transit EF57 ZMU.

RUFFLE, Gosfield Mercedes 0303/Plaxton

HSK 855 (H17 KFC) and HSK 892 (H20 KFC) have been sold to Lewis, Brandon.

S-CAPE, Corringham A second minibus here is Iveco P513 RFW.

STANSTED COACH & CARRIAGE, Birchanger Acquired from Stansted Transport Services is N798 CMJ a LDV 200.

SUPREME COACHES, Southend Acquired from Geldard, Leeds is MCW Metrobus E750 SKR. Similar C352 BUV has been withdrawn.

SWIFT CARS, Little Waltham Have surrendered their PSV operators licence.

TALISMAN, Gt Bromley Setra S250s, NSU 668 re-registered to N5 HGB and WSU 225 re-registered to M858 YVW, have been sold and left for Cyprus in early 2009. This leaves S268 BTL a Setra S250, as the only coach left in the fleet that was acquired from Boons, 10 years ago. Acquired in late 2008 and not previously reported is former Colchester H48 MJN. This brings H47-49 MJN back together again. Bristol VR CBV 2S was reregistered to BHJ 646S, before it left for Cyprus. Registrations CBV 2S, NSU 668 and WSU 225 are held on retention.

THORNS OF ESSEX, Rayleigh The licence was revoked in December (Note this is NOT APT, who continue to operate) RBZ 2675 (new as D265 HFX) a Volvo B10M/Plaxton has gone to Paragon, Spath. DAF MB230/Plaxton A12 APT (new as E339 EVH) has been sold.

TURNERS, Little Maplestead Toyota/Caetano L991 CRY has been withdrawn, with sister L932 TGT back in use.

TWH, Stapleford Abbots Dennis Dart/Duple G501 VYE has been acquired from Mediabus, Croydon. Volvo B10M/N Counties F306 MYJ has been sold to Kent Coach Travel, Sheerness.

WALDEN TRAVEL, Saffron Walden Leyland Tiger/Duple D604 OUA (new as D31 OKH) has been sold.

WILSONS TRAVEL, Grays Ford Transit WIL 2667 (LR55 RKU) and Y708 SBY are here.

WWW.16SEATER.CO.UK, Benfleet This new operator has Mercedes Benz Sprinter MX54 VWL.

Ian Ransom, with thanks to LOTS, PSV Circle, Paul Smith (Talisman), Ian Banks, Colin Paynter



A happy 70th birthday to AJN825, the Westcliff K5G now in the care of the 825 Group, and delivered new on 31 March 1939. Photo D W K Jones, courtesy A D Packer

Transports of Delight ~ Memoirs of a Bus Anorak: 1940 to 2008

by the Revd. Terry Challis

Chapter 2 : part 2 : Times of Change (1951 to 1956)

(The previous part of this story was in Essex Bus News issue 538, February 2009)

There were some other major developments during the early part of this period. In 1951 **Benfleet & District** and its sister company **Canvey & District** were nationalised and taken over by Westcliff as was the City Coach Company in the following year. Both acquisitions involved the addition of many non-standard vehicles into the Westcliff and subsequently Eastern National fleet.

The Benfleet and Canvey take-over was of more immediate interest to me as it involved routes and vehicles that ran near to where I lived. Most of the vehicles were utility Daimlers with AEC engines and pre-selector gear boxes: quite luxurious buses (in engineering terms) for a Tilling fleet! Some of the Daimlers were ex-Birmingham City Transport while the others had been acquired new, as described in Chapter 1 of my story [*EBN issue 536, December 2008*]. They had a variety of bodies by Duple, Park Royal and Brush. One ex-Birmingham bus, FOP340, was originally a CWG5 but my memory of it is that it had an AEC engine when it was with Eastern National; it seems extraordinary that Westcliff/Eastern National should have replaced a Gardner 5LW with an AEC 7.7 engine!

This takeover also involved some elderly AEC Regent 1 buses. Some had been re-bodied with utility bodies by Northern Coachbuilders; the others had Weymann bodies which had been heavily re-built by Beale of Westcliff-on-Sea after Benfleet had bought them second-hand in 1947. Needless to say, the AECs were eventually fitted with 5LW engines. There is some archive video footage of one of these AECs involved in rescue work on Canvey Island during the 1953 floods.

One result of this take-over was that the old Westcliff Motor Services garage in Hadleigh

at the junction of the London Road and Oak Road was vacated in favour of the larger and more modern ('art-deco') Benfleet & District garage near Victoria House Corner, still used by First today. Hadleigh garage continued to operate the ex-Benfleet share of service 3 and soon received an allocation of four brand-new Bristol KSW5Gs for this purpose (FJN 156 to 159). These were the last buses delivered in the red Westcliff livery and, at the time, I thought they were magnificent. However, with their 5LW engines they were not up to the job of keeping time on the busy Southend to Benfleet service and before long they were replaced by the pair of KS6Bs (DJN558/9) and the only KSW6B in the Westcliff/EN fleet (DJN560). However the KSW5Gs (FJN156-9) stayed at Hadleigh for many years.

The former Benfleet/Canvey Daimlers did not last long after Westcliff were absorbed into Eastern National; all had been withdrawn by the end of 1955 with seven passing to Southend Corporation (six for service, one as a scrapper). Westcliff/EN however also acquired post-war Daimler CVs through the City Coach Company takeover and these went on to perform a variety of tasks, such as regular use on the Leigh Station services by Hadleigh Depot. I can remember travelling home from school on service 24 from Leigh Station on one of these Daimlers on many occasions. My brother also told me that they were quite often used on Service 84 (Tarpots Corner to Grays).

The Brush bodied Daimlers, which were built to relaxed utility specifications, were, to my mind, very good buses and gave a livelier and smoother ride than most of the rest of the Westcliff/EN fleet at the time. I believe that WW2 utility buses get a bad press these days. For anyone living in an area served mainly by a Tilling company, Daimler CWA6s were "buses from another planet"! Incidentally, all the buses taken

over from the Benfleet and Canvey fleets were of the high-bridge design.

The other take-over was in 1952 of the **City Coach Company**, whose main service was from London Wood Green to Southend Tyler's Avenue. City had had advertisements on their buses saying 'DON'T LET NATIONALISATION "TAKE YOU FOR A RIDE" YOU WOULD FIND IT VERY EXPENSIVE'. Birch Bros had similar advertisements on their buses (note 1). All this was to no avail and both companies succumbed to the nationalisation bandwagon eventually.

The take-over of City by Westcliff did not affect me directly, as none of the City routes ran through Hadleigh. My only experiences had been on trips to visit relatives at Shotgate which involved a ride on one the magnificent Leyland three-axle Tigers from Rayleigh. At that time the City double-deckers ran via Rettendon instead of the more direct route between Rayleigh and Wickford because of the low-bridge at Shotgate (note 2). The City double deckers were not allowed to pick-up or set down on the diversionary route between Wickford and Rawreth Carpenter's Arms: such was the protection to established operators that existed at that time. Thus when Westcliff/EN took over City this restriction was abolished and the people who lived in Battlesbridge gained a vastly improved bus service (at least until the bridge at Shotgate was lowered in 1961 and deckers were able to use the direct route!).

An interesting by-product of the City take-over that affected me in Hadleigh was that in the Summer of 1952 some impressive new coaches appeared on the Westcliff-on-Sea excursions that passed through Hadleigh every morning on their way to various destinations on the south coast (via Tilbury Ferry of course - no Dartford Crossing in those days!). These coaches were Bristol LS6Gs with handsome ECW

bodies. There were also some other magnificent Leyland coaches the like of which I had never seen before. They were Leyland Royal Tigers with Burlingham Seagull centre-entrance bodies: an unusual purchase for a Tilling company! I later learnt that they had been ordered by City but were delivered after the take-over. There was also a story at the time that the original order was for bus bodies and this had been changed to coach bodies, but sadly it appears now that was not true. Anyway, in a small way the City take-over had made my life as a bus-enthusiast a little more interesting.

Supreme Coaches

In 1951 our family moved from Castle Road, Hadleigh to a house on the corner of Branch Road. This meant that we now lived within a few minutes' walk of the old Westcliff garage at the corner of London Road and Oak Road

TOURS EXCURSION PROGRAMME No. 19

and

EXCURSIONS

from
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA
WESTCLIFF, LEIGH, HADLEIGH, etc.
JULY 1954 (Including August Bank Holiday period)
by
WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA

which had recently been taken over by **Supreme Coaches**. Like many a school-boy bus-spotter I soon started to hang around the garage hoping to get to know a driver or a fitter. This mission was soon accomplished and I was allowed to inspect the coaches and buses at first-hand. The highlight was when I was allowed to sit in the driver's cab of an ex-Huddersfield utility Daimler CWA6 with a Duple low-bridge body: it must have been of the same batch as CCX777 which has been preserved by Quantock Motor Services and recently masqueraded as London Transport D130. To sit in the cab of double-decker bus was my dream and I assisted the fitter by depressing the accelerator pedal while he tuned the engine. Why Supreme Coaches bought this Daimler, I never discovered (note 3).

Supreme also had some fine coaches. The star of the fleet was a front-engined Maudslay Marathon with a Burlingham Seagull 35 seater body. Maudslay had been taken over by AEC in 1948 and the Marathon III model used an AEC engine and gearbox, although I am sure that it had Maudslay axles at least. There was also a Bedford SBG with a Gurney Nutting body. These were both fine vehicles and both were fairly new at the time. The livery of Supreme Coaches was blue and grey.

On most days the garage was visited by two or three other coaches from the associated coach firm of Superior Coaches of Tottenham. They used to lay-over at the garage while working excursions from North London to Southend. Sometimes they received servicing or maintenance. These vehicles were two 30 foot long Crossleys with Burlingham Seagull bodies similar to the Maudslay of Supreme Coaches but seating 37 passengers, and a re-bodied pre-war AEC Regal I also with a Burlingham Seagull body. The livery of Superior Coaches was red and grey.

It is interesting to note that there is still a firm called Supreme Coaches in the Southend area and I would not be surprised if they are owned by the same family (note 4). On a personal note, in the 1990s my son was a pupil at Canon Slade School in Bolton; I was amazed, when I went to see him off on

a school journey to the Continent, that the coach taking the school party belonged to Supreme Coaches! It really is a small world!

During this period of my life, my bus interests were broadened on occasions by trips to London. Sometimes it was just a Sunday afternoon trip to Romford and back on the 2A from Hadleigh Church. Longer visits involved a week's holiday at my Aunt Nell's home at Forest Gate where, with my cousin Mary, I was taken into Central London by bus: the Number 25! There were no artics then: it was an RT or an RTL. There were also rides on 685 and 687 trolleybuses to be enjoyed. One year we had an amazing round-trip on a utility Guy on the 101 from Wanstead Station to North Woolwich and then back on a 669 trolleybus to Stratford. Another year a visit to a relative involved a trip from Wanstead Station to Woodford on a post-war STD on service 20. Perhaps the ultimate "London Bus Holiday" began with a Sunday morning journey on the 2A from Hadleigh Church to Romford. It continued with a ride on London Transport 86 from Romford to Forest Gate "The Princess Alice" where I was met by my cousin Mary. Happy teenage years!

Postscript:

I was fortunate enough to take part in an Omnibus Society tour on the last day of the **Campbell's of Pitsea** operations (1956). The highlight that I remember was to ride on the last journey operated by Campbell's, from Pitsea to Shellhaven and back on their ex-Barton unfrozen AEC Regent II. At Shellhaven it stood alongside a London Transport Country Area RT from Grays Garage: for me it was an amazing sight!

Mention of the Omnibus Society reminds me of how I got into the transport scene in the Southend area. A friend of mine at Westcliff High School for Boys used to go to a church youth club at (I think) St Michael's Church on the borders of Leigh and Chalkwell at the Chalkwell Park end of Leigh Road. This youth club was run by John Taylor who was also a bus enthusiast [and is still a member of the OS and EBEG today!]. I joined this club, although I also went to youth club at Hadleigh Parish Church, and through John Taylor I met Derek Giles and joined the

Omnibus Society; however, I am no longer a member. Derek Giles was, at that time, a schedules clerk at Southend Corporation Transport and was a great encouragement to me. He later became Traffic Superintendent. I well remember one Bank Holiday after Christmas (1955?) when Derek invited me to the Southend Corporation depot and shunted the various types of buses so that I could take photos of all the different types. I was also allowed to set the destination indicators as I wished. I have a photo somewhere of one of the AEC Regal I rebuilt single-deckers showing London Victoria: Express D', as if on hire to Eastern National! Derek was very ambitious for the development of Southend Corporation Transport and I imagine that much of its later expansion of operations was due to him.

Another Omnibus Society visit which I took part in was to Associated Motorways and Black and White in particular. One of the most memorable aspects was to watch the famous 2pm massed departure from Cheltenham Coach Station. The other was that we travelled from London to Cheltenham on a new AEC Reliance with a Willowbrook coach body. At our request, we returned to London on a Guy Arab UF with a similar body which was a couple of years older. The General Manager of Black and White asked us to let him know which we preferred. A vote of passengers, revealed the surprising conclusion that the Guy Arab UF was the more comfortable vehicle, partly because its Gardner engine was not as noisy as that in the AEC!

In the next chapter, Terry joins the staff of Eastern National at Chelmsford as a schedules clerk.

Notes

- (1) a fantastic colour photo of City Daimler D2 showing this slogan painted on the side above the lower deck windows appears in *The Heyday of the Bus - The Postwar Years* by C Carter (Ian Allan Publishing, 1997), along with a shot of Birch Bros HLY483 with an identical banner above the lower deck windows and a further message above the upper deck side windows saying IF THIS BUS

WAS NATIONALISED TO SUBSIDISE BRITISH RAILWAYS FARES WOULD ROCKET! Other superb pictures of local interest in the book - all in colour and reproduced larger than postcard size - are Westcliff AEC Regent JN2800 on the cover, a Hicks Guy Arab, Eastern National Bristol GO5G, a Benfleet & District FOP Daimler CWA6 and Westcliff open top Dennis Lance.

- (2) A short article about Blue Brick Bridge at Shotgate and its rebuilding in 1961 to permit double deck buses to pass under in safety appeared in EBN issue 442, February 2001, and is also available in the *Archive Articles* section of our web-site, www.essexbus.org.uk.
- (3) The utility Daimler (actually CCX698) acquired by Supreme was one of six double and two single deck buses bought to transport workers to the huge petrochemical complex being built at Thames Haven in the 1952-54 period. The Oak Road premises were actually owned by Benfleet Garages Ltd, owned by the Bridge family as the Benfleet and Canvey bus companies had been latterly, and at least one of the contract buses used the "Benfleet Garages" fleetname, after the sale of Benfleet to Westcliff.
- The complex story of all of these various bus and coach companies is comprehensively covered by Peter Clark and Frank Simpson in the 1983 Omnibus Society book, *The Bridge Family and its Buses*, now out of print. The book has proved invaluable in clarifying certain points in this article.
- (4) The present day Supreme Coaches (Greenhill Transport Ltd) is indeed still owned and controlled by a member of the Bridge family but is not the same legal entity as the business that Terry knew in the 1950s.

Edited by Richard Delahoy, who supplied the photos.



Thanks to the foresight of Group member Frank Church, who took a single 12-exposure roll of (very expensive!) colour film back in 1952, we can colour in some of Terry Challis's memories.



The first two shots were taken at the Castle Hotel in Wickford High Street: the top view shows D5, NVX175, one of six Roberts lowbridge bodied Daimler CVD6s. As Terry recalls, after the Westcliff take-over and into EN days, some of these buses gravitated to Hadleigh depot. The Corona fizzy drink advert was very typical of the period but there is no sign of the anti-nationalisation slogans as these pictures were taken after City had sold out to the British Transport Commission.



The middle shot shows sister D3, NVX173, which will have come from Southend via the Rettendon diversion necessary for deckers, described in the article, whilst LT10, CUL804 heads for Southend via the more direct Shotgate route. It is a 1936 Leyland Tiger TS7T with post-war Heaver body.

Finally, until 1952 Westcliff buses were delivered in the Tilling red/cream livery, as exemplified by D1N558, a 1950 Bristol KS6B with the inevitable lowbridge ECW body. Terry recalls this bus on the ex Benfleet & District London Road service but here we see it laying over in Broadway Market, Southend (just off Victoria Avenue at Victoria Circus) before operating a 7 to Rayleigh, presumably before its transfer to HH.



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