

Essex Bus News

Issue 685

May 2021



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk



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Above: Enviro 200 YX68 UUL has returned to Arriva Southend for staff shuttle duties. It arrived from Tunbridge Wells depot on 14 April programmed with this display to mark the passing of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. No other Arriva buses locally have been seen with this display. **Richard Delahoy** photographed it on 19 April, two days after Prince Philip's funeral, approaching Southend Travel Centre. The '06' number on the front panel was its fleet number (prefixed LCA) when in use at London City Airport pre-pandemic. See also page 11. Richard's photo of this bus in Southend in June last year was included in EBN 675.

Front & Rear Covers - First Essex Liveries

Last month's front and rear covers featured the latest First Essex (green) livery. In contrast, over recent months, four vehicles have been acquired in Barbie livery, which was introduced in 1998 and was superseded by Urban in 2012. This has quintupled the number of vehicles in Barbie, previously only 32269 at Colchester, acquired from First Eastern Counties in September 2019, had remained in this livery. The recent acquisitions are 33401-3/5 from Worcester, and 33402 is seen, **Front Cover**, at Southend Travel Centre on 8 March 2021 on route 26. **Richard Delahoy**. 33404 has also been acquired, but is in heritage Midland 'Red' livery, as illustrated on the inside rear cover of last month's magazine. The **Rear Cover** features the predominantly white Urban 2 livery introduced last September. Full captions are on page 32.

Inside Front Cover - Blue, but cloudy, skies, colourful trees, colourful buildings, and colourful Solos

Top: As reported in EBN 683, Central Connect took on some Hertfordshire CC contracts on 11 April 2021 following Centrebus's retreat from the Hertford and Ware area. Solo YJ09 MHO, still in Quality Line colours with former fleet number, climbs Widbury Hill on Ware local route M4, passing the former Plaxton (originally Thurgood) Coachworks site, now occupied by over 70 homes, on 15 April. **Owen Woodliffe**. This bus was also illustrated in EBN 681, in Ongar.

Middle: A recent acquisition for Central Connect is former ASD Coaches Optare Solo CE52 UWR, acquired from Panther Travel dealer stock. It is seen on 13 April 2021 on route 5 in Harlow, still in ASD livery. **Tony Higgs**. See also page 18.

Bottom: The pre-11 April 2021 order. Centrebus Solo 247, CE52 UWX, in Hertford Bus Station on 22 July 2015. **Adam Kelleher**. Co-incidentally, both the middle and bottom photos are from the same batch of Solos, new to Bebb, Llantwit Fardre in October 2002.

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Owen stocks a wide range of colour photos, please send an SAE for details.

Subscriptions

A calendar year subscription is £22. New members may join from any month, 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 £2 per month. For example, a member joining in March would pay £10 x £2, i.e., £20. Please contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shobury Road, Southend-on-Sea SS1 3TT
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Membership Records & Data Protection

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

Reports, Articles & Photographs

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

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Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	4 June
Dispatch by Printers	on or before 14 June

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 5th and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the next month.

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

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Group Notices

Essex Bus News Archive

We have recently completed an index to articles that have appeared in our news sheets and magazines, right back to the first issue in 1964. It is available as an electronic file, capable of being sorted / searched by title, operator, author or topic. If you would like a copy, please e-mail Richard Delahoy (details on page 2). PDF copies of every issue are also still available (or just individual issues, if you need something specific). Again, e-mail Richard for more information.

Magazines for Disposal

The Group has recently been given 119 copies of **Buses** magazine covering the period July 1980 to January 1995 (some full year sets but others with some gaps); they are in fair condition but a bit musty.

From the estate of our late member John Taylor, we also have:

- what appears to be a complete run of **Classic Bus** magazine, issues 1 to 170, 1992 to 2020. We would prefer to dispose of them as a complete set, or runs of issues, not individual copies.

- **Essex Bus News** from 1987 to the end of 2020. Again, we would prefer to deal with complete years or more, not individual issues.

- the **PSV Circle British Journal** and **Overseas Journal**, in both cases 1999 to 2020.

All these magazines are available **free** to members, if you would like some or all of them, please contact Richard Delahoy (preferably by e-mail) - contact details are on page 2; if writing, please enclose an SAE or quote your phone number. They will need to be collected from Southend; delivery in south / mid Essex may be possible. If not claimed by mid-June they will be going for recycling!

The Running Card by Owen Woodliffe

Further to EBN 683, the postponed South East Bus Festival at the Kent Showground, Detling has been rearranged for 10 October this year. The event is being held on a Sunday due to the availability of the showground and a need to avoid clashing with other local events, but the 2022 festival will revert to a Saturday in spring and is already confirmed for 2 April 2022. www.southeastbusfestival.wixsite.co/sef

Other forthcoming events:

Sunday 27 June 'On the Buses', London Bus Museum Brooklands.

Sunday 25 July Fenland Bus Festival, Whittlesea & Classic Car Show, Ramsay. Free Bus Services from Peterborough and from Whittlesea to Ramsay. www.easternbusgroup.co.uk

Sunday 8 August Buses Festival, East of England Showground, Peterborough www.keybuses.com/buses-fest

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

This Month's Issue

Back to the 1950s and 1960s for our two main features this month, including some rare photos. Also, a 1953 photo in 'From the Colour Archive' on the inside rear cover and a 1968 photo in '685 for EBN 685' on page 4. Below left: trainer AEV 798 in Chelmsford garage. Below right: the front cover of Ian Allan's 'British Bus Fleets, Number 4 East Anglian Area' from 1959. Both are mentioned in John Bath's 'Memories of the Eastern National Fleet in 1958/59' article on pages 24-29. Both **EBEG Collection**



685 for EBN 685



Left: 2329, TNO 683, allocated to Braintree, featured in EBN 683 in a photo taken during its last year in service. It was delicensed in August 1968 and withdrawn the next month. 'Withdrawn' does not mean it was immediately sold, withdrawn buses often remained on company premises until collected by new owners. Similar 2331, TNO 685, was a Chelmsford vehicle that was also delicensed in August 1968 and withdrawn in September. It is seen after withdrawal at the back of Maldon garage yard, with the cream bands overpainted red and destination blinds, fleet number and depot code removed. It was at the end of the row of similar buses and still looking in very good condition. And the bus numbered between 2329 and 2331, 2330, TNO 684, isn't completely ignored, part of it can just be seen alongside 2331.

Ian Pritchard

Below: An atmospheric photo of Scania L94UB / WrightBus Solar 65**685**, YR52 VFO, at Manningtree on 15 December 2017 on the 0715 Colchester - Harwich 104. Originally numbered 675 in the local pre Sema scheme, this vehicle passed to First Eastern Counties in April 2019 but was deemed unfit for service and was scrapped.

Robert Appleton



Service Revisions

by Paul Harvey

with thanks to LOTS, Essex, Hertfordshire & Suffolk County Councils, Omnibus Society (Eastern Branch) & Richard Delahoy

From **17 May 2021** further easing of National Lockdown restrictions introduced to allow more freedom to travel.

13 February 2021

498 Brentwood Sainsbury to Romford Queens Hospital (D) **Stagecoach East London** - reduced Mon to Fri service introduced.

27 March

498 Brentwood Sainsbury to Romford Queens Hospital (D) **Stagecoach East London** - service reverted to normal Mon to Fri timetable.

10 April

505 Harlow to Chingford (Sat) **Central Connect** - withdrawn between Waltham Abbey & Chingford due to TfL LEZ.

11 April

7 Cambridge to Saffron Walden (D) **Stagecoach Cambridge** - minor timetable changes due to route revision around Biomedical Campus.

12 April

Arriva Kent Thameside - Southend service 6 reinstated to every 20 mins Mon to Fri and normal timetable Sat & Sun, not as recorded last month due to incorrect information from Arriva website.

Central Connect - full service resumed to pre-lockdown timetables.

First Essex - South Essex: 8/A, revised Mon to Fri timetable, increased to combined 8 min headway during am and pm peak, 100 revised Mon to Fri timetable increased to every 15 mins. Southend 27 additional Mon to Fri evening journeys, 27X two additional morning journeys introduced, 28 minor revision to Mon to Fri timetable with additional school day only journeys. **Chelmsford & Mid Essex:** 13/A/14 afternoon 1553 school day journey from Chelmsford to operate as service 13A, 31 group revised Mon to Fri timetable operating every 30 mins, 36/A/B revised Mon to Fri timetable operating every 30 mins, 37 revised Mon to Fri timetable operating every 15 mins, 40 revised Mon to Fri timetable operating every 30 mins, 42 group revised Mon to Fri timetable Galleywood to Broomfield Hospital every 10 mins extending to Braintree every 30 mins (42B) and Stansted Airport once an hour (42A), 45/A revised Mon to Fri timetable operating every 15 mins, 54/56 revised Mon to Fri timetable operating every 10 mins combined, 57 revised Mon to Sat timetable operating every 20 mins, 70 revised Mon to Sat timetable operating every 30 mins, 71 group revised Mon to Fri off peak timetable every 30 mins, revised Sat timetable and 71A journeys to operate as service 71, 350/351 revised Mon to Sat timetable every 30 mins, X30 additional daily journeys introduced between Chelmsford & Southend. **Colchester & North Essex:** 61 revised Mon to Fri timetable every 15 mins with additional evening journeys added, 62/B revised evening Mon to Sat timetable with additional journeys, 65 revised Mon to Sat timetable every 15 mins with additional evening journeys, 66/B minor changes to Mon to Sat timetable, 67/B/68 minor changes to Mon to Sat timetable with earlier journey from West Mersea Mon to Fri, 75/A revised Mon to Fri timetable, last journey from Colchester extended from Tiptree to Maldon, Sat minor changes to timetable with last journey from Colchester extended to Maldon from Tiptree, 102/3/4 additional Mon to Fri early am journey from Colchester to Harwich introduced plus minor timing changes.

16 April

3/6 Tillingham / Burnham on Crouch to Chelmsford (Alternate Fridays) **Fords Coaches** shopping services reinstated.

17 April

68 Southend Pier to Leigh Station (D) **Ensignbus** service frequency increased to every 30 mins, revised to operate every weekend and Bank Holidays until 19 September and daily 29 May to 6 June & 19 July until 3 September. First two (am) and last (pm) journeys extended to / from Lakeside.

26 April

88 Stifford Clays to Grays (M-S) **Ensignbus** additional journey Mon to Fri 0545 from Stifford Clays to Grays introduced.

28 April

22 Tilbury Amazon to Canning Town (D) **Ensignbus** the 0624 from Barking and 1915 from Tilbury withdrawn. New journey introduced 1400 from Canning Town and 0000 from Tilbury.

16 May

First Essex - South Essex: 20 minor timetable changes on Mon to Fri to improve reliability, 21/B minor timetable changes on Mon to Sat to improve reliability, 25 minor timetable changes on Sat to improve reliability, 27/A on Sat evenings service will operate every 30 mins, 100 minor timetable changes on Mon to Fri mornings to improve reliability, X10 normal daily timetable reinstated operating every hour.

Chelmsford & Mid Essex: 31 group on Sundays additional 31X journey will operate at 1548 from Chelmsford to Maldon (leaving two minutes ahead of the 31D to Burnham, no equivalent return journey from Maldon), 42 group certain journeys on Mon to Fri will extend

to Braintree & Chelmsford as 42B replacing certain journeys on service 70. Minor timetable adjustments between Chelmsford & Galleywood. Additional journeys introduced Sunday evenings between Galleywood & Broomfield Hospital. 45/A additional journey on schooldays introduced from Moulsham Lodge at 0804 as S45, 70 certain journeys between Chelmsford & Braintree replaced by journeys on service 42B, minor changes to timetable to improve reliability on Mon to Fri, 71/72 group the 0835 on Mon to Fri from Colchester to Chelmsford will depart at 0830 and operate 5 mins earlier throughout, X30 normal timetable reinstated operating every hour. **Colchester & North Essex:** 61 revised timetable at weekends to improve reliability, 62/B Mon to Fri additional journey from Brightlingsea at 0830 and from Colchester at 1535 introduced. Minor changes to service 62B on Sundays to improve reliability, 64/A on Sundays will operate every 20 mins and operate later in the evening, 65 revised timetable to improve reliability, 67/B/68 revised timetable on Mon to Fri with additional journeys from Letha Grove to Colchester in the mornings. Additional journey on Sat evening from West Mersea introduced. 75/A revised timetable on Mon to Fri to improve reliability, 102/3/4 revised timetable on Mon to Fri to improve reliability.

17 May

Chelmsford Park & Ride, Chelmer Valley to Chelmsford (M-S) **First Essex** service reinstated on reduced timetable.

29 May

7 Clacton to Brightlingsea (M-S) **Go Ahead Heddingham** service revised to operate between Clacton & St Osyth Beach for the summer until 31 August with increase in frequency.



by Adam Kelleher

First Group News

Further to the news in EBNs 662, 669 & 673 about the potential sale of First Bus followed by the reversal of this decision, with First Group instead seeking to sell its North American businesses, on 23 April 2021 FirstGroup plc announced that it has entered into an agreement for the sale of First Student and First Transit, which have headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio, to EQT Infrastructure for \$4.6bn (£3.3bn) subject to shareholder approval. The Greyhound business remains non-core and the Group continues to pursue all exit options for it. The transaction allows FirstGroup to make a £336m contribution to UK defined benefit pension schemes and address other longstanding liabilities (including those relating to the Greyhound business) whilst ensuring that the ongoing business is appropriately capitalised to continue investing for the future.

Acquired Vehicle

31785 YN53 EOK YV3S2J4123A002912 3015/10 H49/27F 10/03 First South Yorkshire
Volvo B7TL / Transbus. From First Eastern Counties, arrived at Colchester on 27 April 2021. It had only been at FEC, at Ipswich, since 11 April (it had been a replacement for 32489, withdrawn with chassis corrosion). Ipswich depot cannot accommodate full height double deckers, hence its move to Essex, with 32476 going to Ipswich in exchange. Urban livery, LED blinds. It has Potteries main fleet names and Adderley Green depot stickers, having only moved there from Doncaster in November / December last year. It has not yet entered service.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 12 2020/21 (21 February - 27 March) - additional to EBN 684

33404 FG-HH (oos), 67904 CF-BN

Period 1 2021/22 (28 March - 24 April)

32068 CR (oos)-CR, 32485 CR-CF, 33186 HH-BN, 33404 HH (oos)-HH-HH (oos), 33405 FG-HH, 63340 CR (oos)-CR, 67164 BN-CF
Further to EBN 684, 32068 did return to service on 12 April, but on normal routes, not school services. 33404 has been towed to Chelmsford depot for a replacement engine to be fitted. 33405 entered service on routes 27/20 on 21 April. It has replaced 33186 which has gone to Basildon (and was actually in service from BN on 20th, on routes 8 & 25), doubling the number of Presidents there. 67164 only operated for two days at CF, 12 & 13 April, it was then seen at Mardens on 28th, being prepared for repaint, although at the time still in its old silver and green livery. It re-entered service in new livery, on route 351, on 8 May. (Further to last month, this has been repainted ahead of 67160.)

Disposals

As reported above, 32476 returned to First Eastern Counties at Ipswich in April in exchange for 31785 (32476 had been new to FEC and was acquired by First Essex in July 2011). Last day in service with First Essex was 26 April, on route 65. Further to EBNs 682 & 683, 33178 has gone from Ensignbus to Shelton Motors, Ely, for scrap, April 2021.

School Services from 12 April 2021

Schools returned after the Easter Holiday break on 12 April. The below reports are from 12 April to 7 May inclusive.

Colchester

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

30564 and 30567 continue to be the mainstay on route 17, they have not been reported on any other services in this period. 37005 was on the route on 22nd & 23rd plus 5 May, instead of 30567 on the first two dates and instead of 30564 on the third.

Route 67C has continued to be operated by different vehicles each day (and indeed on most days different vehicles on mornings and afternoons), 32087, 32477, 32478, 32547, 32669, 37004, 37005, 37010, 37017, 37020, 37036, 37054, 37133, 37135, 37136, 37140, 63341, 66801, 66804, 66828, 66971, 67736, 67739 and 67755 have all been reported.

Chelmsford

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CF. All dates April 2021 except where stated.)

Routes S33 and 525 have continued to be exclusively worked by Essex Airlink liveried Scania 36837 and 36841, they have swapped between these routes in this period, but each day they have stayed on the same route all day. They haven't been used on any other services except 36841 on X30 on Bank Holiday Monday 3 May and again on Saturday 8th. 36841 is seen below on route S33 at The Broadway, Debden on the afternoon of 23 April 2021 **Andrew Colebourne**.



S42A in mornings then S57 & S32 in afternoons: these have been worked exclusively by 44913 and 44914, except on 20th & 27th when operated by 44915. Also, on 15th, the S57 was worked by a different vehicle, 42933.

S42B in mornings then S42A in afternoons: Since 12 April there has been a new afternoon S45 route added to this schedule, running before the S42A. These routes have also been mainly worked by 44913 and 44914 (so on the days each is not running the S42A/S57-S32 schedule above), exceptions being 44915 on 28th & 29th. Also, on 27th, 44913 worked S42B in the morning, but afternoon S45 & S42A were operated by 42898, with 66817 also on S42A.

Routes 570 and 620 have mainly been operated by 32483 & 32484 (swapping between the routes), exceptions being 32482 on 570 (16th) and additional on 620 (4 May), 32640 on 570 (6 May), 36843 additional on 620 (23rd), 32485 additional on 620 (28th), 32640 on 620 (5 May).

Basildon

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

Route 561: this three-vehicle route has mainly been operated by 32531, 32532 and 32539 (e.g., all three on 14th, 15th, 16th, 29th, 30th, 6 & 7 May plus different combinations on other days). 33507 has also been reported on seven occasions. Other vehicles reported

have been 32526, 32530, 33086, 33551, 33562, plus 33424 on 4 & 5 May when it wasn't working on 625.

625: has mainly been worked by heritage NBC liveried 33424, exceptions being 33507 (13th pm & 14th am), 33573 (20th pm), 32531 (28th and 4 May both am & pm), 69905 (4 May pm), 33504 (5 May am), HH33403 (5 May pm).

725: almost exclusively worked by 47653, the only two exceptions being 47650 (13th pm) and 47654 (14th pm).

825: mainly worked by 33504, exceptions being 32532 (12th pm), 32530 (13th am), 33549 (13th pm), 32260 (14th pm), 33507 (20th am & pm, 5 May am), 33574 (4 May am & pm).

Hadleigh

(All vehicles listed below allocated to HH. All dates April 2021 except where stated.)

Since 12 April, following on from the previous term, Trident / Presidents 33133, 33134 and 33136 have continued to operate on routes 820, 822 and 827 respectively and nothing else, with a few exceptions. On 15th, after finishing schools' work, 33133 ran on a short 28. On 19th 33383 took over from 33133 on route 820 during the morning plus ran afternoon journeys. On 6 May afternoon only, 33133 and 33134 swapped routes.

Other Area News & Workings

Colchester

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

Further to EBNs 681, 682 & 684, 63340 finally returned to service from reserve on 20 April, on route 64, following its accident repairs.

News of the Harwich routes (6 April -3 May). The summer school term started on 12 April, with some changes to peak hour morning vehicle duties: 0605 Harwich - Colchester 104, then 0731 175, 0850 174, 1050 175, 1245 174 Colchester - Fingringhoe - Colchester circulars, then worked as required; 0712 Harwich - Colchester Middleborough 103, then worked as required, usually on 64, 64A, or 65; 0715 Maldon - Colchester 75, dead to Mistley, 0915 Mistley - Colchester 103, then worked as required, usually on 62 or 75. The three all day duties started with 0650 Harwich - Colchester 104, 0555 Colchester - Harwich 104, 0725 Colchester - Harwich 104.

On 12 April 37010 worked 0725 West Mersea - Colchester Norman Way Schools 67C instead of 0715 Maldon - Colchester 75, but the 75 journey was worked before 0915 Mistley - Colchester 103 for the rest of the month. The duty starting with 0605 Harwich - Colchester 104 was originally single-deck, but this became double-deck from 19 April. Then the three peak am vehicle duties settled down to two double-deck and one single-deck, and the all-day duties were also two double-deck and one single-deck, e.g., on 26 April:

32669 on 0605 Harwich - Colchester 104, then 175/174 as above

67779 on 0712 Harwich - Colchester Middleborough 103

32673 on 0715 Maldon - Colchester 75, dead to Mistley, 0915 Mistley - Colchester 103

32477 on 0650 Harwich - Colchester 104, 0820 Colchester - Harwich 104, stayed on 103/104 all day

37053 on 0555 Colchester - Harwich 104, 0720 Harwich - Colchester 104, stayed on 103/104 all day

66801 on 0725 Colchester - Harwich 104, 0900 Harwich - Colchester 104, stayed on 103/104 all day.

Despite the increase in double-deck workings, all 12 ADL Enviro 300 allocated to Colchester worked on 103/104 in this period plus 10 of the 12 Volvo B7RLEs and six StreetLites. Double-decker workings were four Volvo B7TL / ALX400s, 18 Volvo B7TL / Wright Eclipse Geminis and two Volvo B9TL / Wright Eclipse Geminis.

The Saturday 103/104 vehicle duties had a variety of three single-deckers or three double-deckers, or a mixture of both. The Sunday 102 vehicle duties continued with interworking with service 75 and changed from single-deck to double-deck on 18 April when 37010, 37042 & 37140 were used, and remained double-deck for Sundays up to and including 2 May and Bank Holiday Monday 3 May, 37015, 37053 & 37140 were in use on 3rd.

On the Clacton routes, the opposite situation to last month's report, with mainly single-deckers on route 74B but mainly double-deckers on route 76. Double-deckers on 74B have been 37106 (9th), 32087 (17th), 37053 (24th), 37140 (1 May), 32478 (8 May), all Saturdays apart from 9th. Single-deckers have been 66801, 66810, 66759, 66798, 66816, 66828, 66970, 66971, 67735, 67736, 67737, 67738, 67741 and 67742. Double-deckers on 76 have been 37062 (18th), 32087 (25th), 37005 (2 May), 37037 (Bank Holiday Monday 3 May) and 32629 (9 May) with single-decker 67736 on 11 April.

Colchester single-deck workings on route 70: one or two single-deckers on some days, mainly Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus, but also StreetLites 63338 on 5 May & 63337 on 7 May and Enviro 300s 67735 on 27th, 67779 on 4 May & 67805 on 8 May.

Chelmsford

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CF. All dates April 2021 except where stated.)

Further to EBN 684, the Chelmsford Park & Ride Enviro 200 MMCs all returned to service on 12 April (except 67196 on 13th), on the re-opened Sandon Park & Ride (Chelmer Valley is still closed) and on the 31 group & 71/72 group of services. The return of schools on 12 April also brought the return of Essex Airlink liveried Scania's to route 70 on weekdays, all except 36837 and 36841, which were being used on school services (see above), being reported. These vehicles have also been used on short 42s.

Other unusual / interesting sightings: 42939 was a very unusual single-decker on 350 on 12 April, the route was specifically introduced for double-deck operation as it avoids the Duke Street low railway bridge. On 7 May, 32676 broke down at the Green Dragon, Shenfield on its 0900 return from Brentwood Station to Chelmsford and was still there at 2pm. 42944 very unusual on Park & Ride on 5 May. 44900 a small vehicle on 71A on 14th & 15th. Conversely, 66837 a long vehicle on 73 on 6 May. 44914 on driver shuttles on 28th. Three different liveries from the same small batch of vehicles on 40 on 30th, 67160 (silver & green), 67162 (Essex Bus green) and 67167 (Urban). 67160 was on 71 on 14th, bringing the old X10 livery to Colchester.

Basildon & Hadleigh

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

Hadleigh's 33403 was on loan to Basildon for two days, as reported above it was on 625 on afternoon of 5 May, then the next day it was on 8 in the morning and 5 in the afternoon. On 7th it was back at HH on 27X, 27, 20 and 21. HH44003 was at BN on 16 April, on 9 all day (it was on 25 the previous afternoon, but this may have been an HH working).

On route 9 the balance has swung in favour of double-deckers. Prior to the pandemic, this route was almost completely StreetLite operated with the odd double-decker working. After the first lockdown, it became roughly 50:50, but recently, during the week there have been four double-deckers (mainly Enviro 400s) to one StreetLite. Conversely, route 94/A has switched from pre-pandemic double-deck operation to very few, with in fact no double-deckers reported in the last month. It has been operated almost exclusively by StreetLites, but mini-Enviro 200 44908 was in use on 17th & 29th plus 7 May, and similar 44909 on 24th. On 9th, 47650 broke down in South Woodham, the 0803 journey to Basildon did not run. 47653 replaced it on the 0900 from Basildon. 47653 was itself then replaced by 47656 on the 1300 from Basildon. Going back to route 9, double-deckers other than Enviro 400s reported have been 32539 (17th), 32530 & 32531 (23rd), 32249 & 32540 (27th), 33086 (28th plus 6 May), 32530 again (30th). 33086 proved the prediction on the centre pages of EBN 682 about not seeing Presidents on the 9 again wrong, albeit these are the first reports of one since November last year. Single-deckers other than StreetLites: as reported above HH44003 (16th), 44909 (17th), 69914 (29th).

Other unusual / interesting sightings as follows. Double-deckers on 100: 32531 (22nd plus 5 May), 33504 (29th), 33557 (30th), 33570 (23rd). Mini-Enviro 200s on the route: 44908 (27th), 44909 (22nd). 66825 on X10 (8 May). HH67197 on 27 (18th & 6 May).

New 'Essex Bus' Green Livery

As reported above, 67164 repainted into new livery. One minor addition to the report in EBN 684. At the rear of the cove panels the 'from First f' is green on (a different shade of) green on 69421, but on 67162 it is white on the black cove panels of Enviro 200 MMCs.

Correction to EBN 684 page 11: The photo of the StreetLite on route 20 was 63161, not 61361.

With thanks to R Appleton, S Barham, J Collins, D Edwards, J Lidstone, W Morrison, J Podgorski, I Ransom, C Stewart, First Essex, Bustimes, Bus Lists on the Web, Coach & Bus Week, Facebook, Flickr, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

Below: Basildon's mini-Enviro 200 44910 on route 10 at Wickford Station on 27 April 2021. **David Moth**



by **Richard Delahoy** with thanks to the Company

Vehicles

Acquired is YN56 FEO, a Scania OmniCity N270, B19D + racking. Bought from Dawsonrentals, it had been used by Apcoa for car park shuttles.

Scania 631 (from Haverhill depot) is on temporary loan to sister company Galloway from 12 April to assist with a new contract win there.

Services and Operations

School duplication on various bus services has continued after Easter to the previous pattern, using coaches from the Galloway fleet.

One interesting operational change is that NIBS school service 51, Chafford Hundred to Southend & Westcliff High Schools, is now operated by NIBS in the morning but by a Stephensons Rochford bus in the afternoon.

Bury St Edmunds outstation closed at the start of May, with the four vehicles based there moving back to Haverhill.

Most of Stephensons and NIBS weekly and longer ticket products are now available on the 'MyTrip' App, which also offers live tracking.

Uniforms have been introduced at NIBS, to the same style as Stephensons but with a red jacket, epaulets, and tie instead of green.

Right: Stephensons 436, YY67 USD, on route 6A at a foggy Leigh-on-Sea at 0807 on 20 April 2021. Fogs are not common here, possibly two-four a year - they drift in from the sea / Thames estuary. **John G Lidstone**



Below: Reports on the acquisition of Enviro 200s 438 & 439 have been in the last three EBNs. 438 entered service with NIBS on 6 April and 439 on 10th. The latter is seen at Ongar, Two Brewers on route 21 on 28 April. **Robert Downton**. A photo of this bus as acquired was in EBN 683.





by Peter Mansbridge with thanks to Richard Delahoy, Matthew Evans, Nat Ford, Peter Halls, Keith Sadler, Vectare Ltd, Richard Lewis and M&M & Travellers Choice drivers

Vehicles

Southend: correcting a correction (!), we understand that Southend Transport liveried Volvo 3816 IS to be converted to a driver trainer. We don't receive official news from the company, hence are unable to always verify reports, but in this case the parts for the conversion have now been delivered to the depot so we are pretty sure it is now going ahead. Enviro 200 YX68 UUL returned to Southend on 14 April 2021 for staff shuttle duties. Originally used at London City Airport, it had been at Southend last year but was latterly at Tunbridge Wells (more details in EBNs 677-681). A photo is on page 1.

Colchester: short Dart 1564 stayed at Southend for crew shuttles for a few extra days and finally returned to Colchester on 13 April. Colchester's 1558/63 remain on loan at Guildford depot.

School Duplicates - Southend

As we anticipated last month, these have continued to be externally operated by vehicles and drivers on hire from other operators, despite the notes on the Arriva timetables suggesting that many would be with fleet vehicles. Indeed, there no longer appear to be any duplicates run by Arriva vehicles themselves, apart from the scheduled extra double deck short workings on 7 and 29 that pre-date the pandemic and are part of the standard schooldays timetable. Another new operator has started work on duplication, The Travellers Choice - of Carnforth, Lancashire!! See below for more details. The Southend PVR is now 52 (plus two shuttles) with 59 buses allocated (plus two shuttles), to which must be added the numerous duplicates.

The full list of duplicates/operators, from personal observations, now appears to be:

Morning peak = 7 vehicles (8 on Fridays):

- 2 x Grange Travel (service 7)
- 2 x M&M Staffing (services 7 & 8)
- 1 x Peter Godward (service 29)
- 1 x Travellers Choice (service 7)
- 1 x Vectare (service 7) plus 1 on Fridays only (service 1).

Afternoon peak = 13 vehicles for 14 journeys (14 vehicles/15 journeys on Fridays):

- 4 x Travellers Choice (services 1, 7 & 8)
- 3 x Peter Godward (services 6, 7, 29)
- 3 x M&M Staffing (services 1 & 8)
- 2 x Grange Travel (services 8 & 9)
- 1 x Vectare (service 7) plus 1 on Fridays only (service 1).

A fifteenth vehicle appeared on the afternoon of Friday 30 April, a Klarners coach (presumably on sub-hire from M&M) on route 7 running together with a Travellers Choice vehicle but we have not yet been able to clarify the status of that trip; it has not been seen subsequently.

Following on from last month's comments, there is now one journey operated by no less than SIX vehicles. This is on the 7, over the section between Southend Victoria Station and Ashingdon Schools, timed at Victoria Station at 0658 and comprises:

- Arriva double decker, Shoebury Asda to Ashingdon Schools
- Arriva single decker, Southend Chichester Road to Rayleigh Station
- Grange coach, Shoebury Asda (probably) to either Ashingdon or Rayleigh
- Grange coach, Southend Chichester Road to either Rayleigh or Ashingdon
- M&M coach / bus, Southend Victoria Station to Rayleigh
- Vectare bus, Shoebury Asda (probably) to Rayleigh.

Attempts to capture all six in a single photo have so far proved elusive (and there are only so many mornings when your local correspondent is prepared to get up at 0600 to go out and try!) but the picture on page 13 taken on 13 April shows five in a row in Chichester Road waiting to cross Queensway, where the sixth vehicle was waiting. For the record, this line up is Arriva 6512, Grange BV20 HLY, Arriva 3756, Grange BV70 UBZ and, nearest the camera, Vectare 304.

The morning and afternoon service 29 trips to & from Westcliff High Schools each have three buses, one Arriva service car to & from Belgrave Road, the Arriva double-deck S29 and a Peter Godward double-decker. One afternoon service 8 from Rayleigh, the 1446, also has two duplicates (one each from Grange and M&M).

Further vehicles on hire, not seen previously, are:

Grange Travel: BN17 JUT, Mercedes-Benz Tourismo tri-axle (ex-Shearings) in all-over blue and 2-axle Tourismos BV19 YGA & BV19 YGD, both in white.

Peter Godward: CC19 PGC, Irizar i6 tri-axle. Unusually on 23 April, Tourismo coach BF61 HCO (previously used from time to time) was substituting on the 29 for DAF double decker T88 PGC.

The Travellers Choice:

P016 LZM Volvo B11R, Jonckheere; P017 CLV Volvo B11RT, Jonckheere; P017 CLX Volvo B11RT, Jonckheere; BU18 YPO Mercedes-Benz Tourismo; SB19 GNP Volvo B11RT, Jonckheere; SB19 GNU Volvo B11RT, Jonckheere; P019 CXC Irizar i6; P020 DTY Irizar i6.

Two Travellers Choice coaches (SB19 GNU and SD16 BKB, the latter not yet observed on hire to Arriva) have also been noted in Colchester on MoD work. Four or five are based in Southend at any one time, parked at the Premier Inn on the A127 at the Tesco roundabout. We understand that two coaches are also operating for Arriva at Ware, from a local Premier Inn there.

M&M Staffing have once again been using a coach from **Klarners** of Colchester, Higer-bodied Scania YN69 XWM, and occasionally Scania L94 / Wrightbus YN05 WKE on one of their three workings. Then on 5 May, Klarners' Mercedes Tourismo BV66 GVX was also noted in use.

This takes the total of different buses/coaches noted working on hire to Arriva Southend since last September to no less than **52**.

It's worth reflecting on how and why these duplicates are running. Social distancing rules for public transport have meant that most buses can only run at about 50% or less of their seated capacity (and no standing allowed), which was fine whilst the schools were closed but clearly wasn't going to work once the schools restarted last September. Risk assessments said that buses carrying only school or college pupils could load to close to 100% of the seating capacity, but that precluded the general public being carried and would have left ordinary passengers stranded. Hence the Department for Education agreed to provide funding to Local Authorities to enable them to procure duplicates to bolster existing local services, with the duplicates restricted to school & college pupils. The choice of routes and times is agreed between the bus operators and the LAs and the operators either provide the duplicates from within their own resources (vehicles and drivers) or contract with other operators to provide vehicles with drivers.

In Arriva's case, this has meant using operators who are on an approved sub-contractor list, so that work has not necessarily gone to the more obvious local players. At Southend, that might have meant Cooks Coaches or Kirbys Coaches, both with fleets of tour and excursion coaches standing idle, //those companies were interested (we don't know if they were). But no, the first surprise was to find operators like Grange Travel of Gravesend and Westway of Hayes coming empty to Southend every day, then White Lion of Addlestone - for one week only in that case, as it transpired - and now Lancashire-based Travellers Choice. The funding is currently agreed to the Whitsun half-term and we await news of whether it will continue and whether the duplicates will still be needed for the final part of the current school year. In part that will depend on whether the existing social distancing rules remain in place and for how much longer.

Other Services

Some unusual workings at **Colchester** saw Park & Ride liveried buses on normal service on route 77/A, 4074 on 12 April, 4071 the following three days and 4075 on 16th, 4075 had also worked on the 1 on 15th.



The Travellers Choice (John Shaw & Son Ltd) of Carnforth are providing four coaches for Arriva Southend duplication. PO20 DTY and BU18 YPO in Chichester Road on 14 April 2021 on **previous page** and P017 CLX on 30 April in London Road at Chalkwell Park **bottom**, details of the vehicles on previous page. **Below:** the line-up of five vehicles referred to on page 11. All **Richard Delahoy**



Services

From 4 May 2021, due to increased loadings, route 61/C, which had mainly been operated by minibuses, had full sized buses allocated for most journeys. For approximately four weeks after this they were due to be cash-only, as Contactless facilities were not available. 303, BK13 NZS, was on the 61 on 4th.

The Optare Versa demonstrator OP07 ARE (illustrated last month) was in Brentwood High Street at 1530 on 22 April, possibly on a schools' duplicate for route 61. It has also been used on Greater Anglia rail replacement recently, including on Bank Holiday Monday 3 May.



Left: Brentwood Station on 18 September 2020, with minibus Mercedes Benz Sprinter / EVM 200, WN69 FYL, on route 61C. As mentioned above, full size buses are now being used as the regular vehicles on route 61/C. At the time of writing, this vehicle was being used on Vectare's Midlands operations, on route 833 'Nottsbus Connect'. **Adam Kelleher**

Below: NIBS Buses run route 21 hourly between Brentwood and Ongar (see photo on page 10), but there is another route 21 to Ongar, operated by Vectare. This only runs once a day each way as a positioning journey for route 13, Epping - Waltham Abbey. 303 is seen at Auckingford Gardens, Ongar on 29 April on its evening return (1937 ex Epping).

Robert Downton



Photo Feature: Rare Rears - Part 1, ENOC Bristol / ECW Ks

Photos of the rears of buses from the 1960s are quite rare. We are fortunate that member Brian Ashley had the foresight to take some such photos and equally so that he has kindly made them available for use in EBN. Several different types feature in Brian's collection, and others will be included in future EBNs, but to start with here is a selection of ECW bodied Eastern National Bristol Ks (and a couple of KSWs). All photos (except top of next page) taken between August 1964 renumbering and date of withdrawal. All photos taken by **Brian Ashley** except the bottom one on page 17.

Top right: CHJ 256, Bristol K6B / ECW, new to Westcliff-on-Sea 1948, Eastern National 1299 January 1955, renumbered 2227 August 1964. Withdrawn October 1965. At Hadleigh garage. Rear number / via point box and destination box painted over.



Middle right: NNO 105, new as 4005 in 1948, although it had a new chassis frame fitted in 1951. Renumbered 1317 in July 1954 and 2245 in August 1964. It was withdrawn in June 1967, although it had been delicensed since that January. It spent its last month in service at Brentwood, but prior to that it was a Southend vehicle, as seen here at Leigh Station on route 25A. Rear number / via point box painted over, destination blind still in use.



Bottom right: DHJ 608, Bristol K5G / ECW, new to Westcliff-on-Sea 1949, Eastern National 1324 January 1955, renumbered 2252 August 1964. Withdrawn October 1967. At Basildon garage, with municipal buildings in the background, at what is now the Trafford House end of the yard. A third combination - destination blind still in use, but number / via point box panelled over. KSWs, LDs, FSs and FLFs kept at least a destination blind and number display at the rear throughout the 1960s, it is not known why Ks were treated differently.



In June 1963 Eastern National acquired six Bristol K / ECWs from Wilts & Dorset, which they numbered in the acquired buses sequence as 1051-6 (DMR 836/38-40, EAM 612/3) and which became 2202/4-8 respectively in August the next year. These had large T-type destination screens as seen on the only K6B (the others were K5G), 2207, EAM 612, below, withdrawn alongside Bristol LWL5G 1134, which had been new to Westcliff-on-Sea. 1134 had been allocated to Basildon prior to withdrawal and 2207 to Southend. Both were



withdrawn in February 1965. They are seen after withdrawal at Maldon garage yard. In contrast, in the bottom photo on the previous page, 2208, EAM 613, has a standard Eastern National size T-type blind in this photo at Hadleigh garage, possibly retrofitted after acquisition. A KSW is in front. 2208 only spent one month at HH after previously being at Southend, before being withdrawn in January 1965, so this photo was possibly taken in December 1964.



Above left: showing painted over rear number / via point box next to an example of both boxes panelled over. 2217 (CHI 252) and 2221 (MPU 15), 1947 & 1948 K5Gs, the former new to Westcliff, at Hadleigh garage after withdrawal, with the destination blind removed from 2217 and both with their fleet number and depot plates removed, dating this photo to circa January 1965. Above right: showing the extra width of a KSW compared to a K, most obvious in the lower deck rear window, and the three-piece rear destination displays on KSWs. FJN 157 had been new to Westcliff-on-Sea in August 1952 and was numbered 1387 in January 1955 and 2344 in August 1964. It was withdrawn in February 1969, although it had been delicensed for three months prior to this. On route 24 at Belton Way West, Leigh Station.

Below: another combination of rear blinds - rear number / via box partially painted over (in black this time) but a one-piece number blind added in the middle, although unhelpfully turned to white blank with the destination blind not much use either. 2269 (ONO 78) is at Basildon Bus Station. **EBEG Collection**, probably taken by **Bill Cansick**.



by **Adam Kelleher** with thanks to Tony Higgs, Ross Newman, Steve Stapleton, Owen Woodliffe, Bus Lists on the Web and Flickr

New Vehicles

ADL Enviro 200 MMCs CC21 GAL and CE21 GAL delivered in early May 2021, with two more to follow. More details next month.

Acquired Vehicles

CE52 UWR Optare Solo M850, B27F, new to Bebb, Llantwit Fardre 10/02

FY52 RZC Optare Solo M920, B33F, new to Brylaine, Boston 09/02

Acquired from Panther Travel dealer stock, as reported under 'Panther' last month, ex ASD coaches, still in ASD blue and white livery.

CE52 UWR had been registered F6 ASD whilst with ASD but regained its original registration. It has also previously worked for Dorchester Park & Ride and Yellow Buses, Bournemouth. It was seen on route 5 in Harlow on 13 April 2021, see photo on inside front cover.

FY52 RZC was reported on route 14 on 12 April. It had been registered E8 ASD whilst with ASD but also regained its original registration. It previously worked for Yellow Buses, Bournemouth and Nordcat (North Dorset Community Accessible Transport). Incidentally, both vehicles were repainted from Yellow Buses livery to ASD livery at Mardens in 2015.

LJ58 AVE Alexander Dennis Enviro 200, B29D, new to Arriva London ENL20, 10/08

Acquired from Arriva London, via Ensignbus. Reported on route 351 on 22 April. In all red livery.

Further to EBN 684, Alexander Dennis Dart / East Lancs P056 JFE, was reported on route 384 on 12 April (still in 'Here East' wrap).

Repaint & Re-registrations

LJ09 KPG repainted to Central Connect livery and re-registered to CC54 BUS, first day out after this was 27 April. LJ09 KRE, already repainted (see EBN 684), was also re-registered on that date, to CC55 BUS.

Below: A very unusual working on 29 April 2021 was Herts CC 386 Bishops Stortford Stevenage route branded CC10 BUS on the last 420 (1955 ex Ongar), seen at Two Brewers Ongar. **Robert Downton**



by **Mark Lloyd** with thanks to John Podgorski and the Hedingham website

Acquired Vehicle

284 OU57 FGX ADL Short Enviro 200 - ex Carousel 503 by mid-April.

Loan Vehicles

506 PJ02 PYW Volvo B7TL/East Lancs Myllenium Vyking from Konectbus
613 SN62 AVY ADL Enviro 400 - ex Konectbus by 30 April

Withdrawn Vehicles

291 EU06 KCX ADL MPD - engine failure, in store at HD. Withdrawn from service being assessed - may not re-enter service.

Significant Allocations

283	CN - HD	by w/e 10 April
283	HD - KN	by 12 April
457	HD -CN	loan to CN - seen on 97/98 service group 16 April
506	Konectbus - HD	by 13 April
523	CN - KN	by 14 April
525	CN - HD	seen running 88 and 89 services from w/c 12 April
527	CN - KN	by 21 April returned to CN by 27 April
528	CN - KN	by 21 April
584	HD	had been at CN, presumably via KN seen on 89 w/c 12 April

Fleet News

283, OU57 FGV, entered service on Clacton town service 5/A on Saturday 10 April but had been transferred to KN by 12th. It is seen, right, at KN depot on 13th (**John Podgorski**). Sister 284, OU57 FGX, finally arrived at HD depot but needed work internally to flooring before entry into service. FGX is in Carousel's maroon and red livery so presumably like 298 will only have fleet names added unlike 283 which was totally repainted. 284 is still awaited into service as going into press.

506, PJ02 PYW, is on loan from Konectbus to help provide cover for the repairs to accident

damaged 616, SN10 CCV, covering mainly schools' contracts to allow native deckers to be redistributed. Of which, 525, LX05 EZH, has been operating from HD on 88/89 services in the absence of 616. 584, PJ02 REU, as noted above has also reached HD working the 89 service on 15 April. 506 retains dual door layout. 616 has moved to CN for continued repair assessment. 877, PN09 ENO, is back in service after accident repairs. 265, EU10 AOX, Enviro 200 has been repainted to new livery, leaving 263 at HD the final long Enviro 200 in original livery, along with short Enviro 200s 292 & 293. The last day of April saw 613, SN62 AVY, Enviro 400 arrive at HD from Konectbus, currently as a loan. It is H47/32F and was new to Konectbus in October 2012.

Service News

Service 7 from 29 May will cease to serve beyond St Osyth beach to Brightlingsea. The current M-F timetable has three journeys each way Clacton to Brightlingsea. The revision provides an all-day service between Pier Avenue and St Osyth beach front M-S with additional pm journeys on school holidays.





Dealer Stock Movements April 2021

Vehicles In

From **Arriva London**: (All in very poor condition and likely to go straight to scrap - any resold will be advised)

Darts LJ54 LHL / LJ05 GPF / SN06 BPF

DAF DB250 KL52 CXJ

Enviro 200s LJ07 EDU/ECT, LJ58 AVZ/AUW/AUY

Enviro 400 LJ08 CYP

Volvo B7TLs LJ04 YWT, LJ54 BCF/BCK, LJ55 BVD/E/F/L/U/W/Z

From **Bear Buses**: Trident V479 KJN

From **First South West**: Volvo B7TLs WR03 YZV/W

From **Go Ahead London**: Volvo B7TLs W541/2 WGH, LX54 GZH/L/M/N

From **Go Ahead NE**: Volvo B9R YY63 OJD

From **Lothian Buses**: Volvo B9TLs SK07 CCA/CAE/CAO/CAU/CAV, SN57 GNJ/K

From **Original London Sightseeing**: Volvo B7TLs LX05 GDZ/GEJ/KNZ/KOA/HSC, EU05 DVW/X, DAF DB250s LJ51 DJZ/DKE-F/DKK-L/V, LF52 URI/K

From **Private Owner**: Spectra YJ51 ZVM

From **Stagecoach Highlands**: Volvo B12Bs SVO8 GXO/GXN, SV09 EGD/EGK, SJ57 AAX-Z, SF57 DPV, Volvo B7R SP06 SVJ

Vehicles Out

Volvo B9TL BJ11 EAF: **ASD Coaches, Strood**

Volvo B11RT BX65 WDE: **Candy Coaches, Morden, Surrey**

Volvo B9TLs SK07 CCA/CAE/CAO/CAU/CAV, SN57 GNK: **Catteralls Coaches, Southam, Warwicks**

Volvo B7R KX56 JZM: **Coastal Liner, Wolverhampton**

Volvo B9TL LX60 DXH: **D&E Coaches, Inverness**

Trident LN51 GMF: **First South West**

Trident V479 KJN: **Fourways, Chelmsford**

Enviro 200 LJ58 AVE: **Galleon Travel, Roydon, Essex** - see page 18

Enviro 200 LJ09 KPN: **Go Ahead NE**

Volvo B7RLE SN57 DCO: **Happy Als, Liverpool**

Volvo B9TLs BJ11 EBP/DZY: **London Borough of Havering**

Volvo B12Bs SJ57 AAY, SV08 GXP: **Panther Travel, Harwich** - see page 22

Enviro 200 LJ09 KPL: **Redline, Aylesbury**

Volvo B7RLE SK07 CGX: **Ricardo UK Ltd, Shoreham**

DAF LF52 URI: **Riviera Tours, Torquay**

Volvo B7RLE SK07 CGV: **Roselyn Coaches, Par, Cornwall**

Trident V517 ESC: **Shoreline Suncoasters, Scarborough**

Volvo B9TL BJ11 DVX: **Shiel Buses, Fort William**

Enviro 200s GN08 CHD/CGX-Z: **Thandai Reds, Smethwick, Birmingham**

Volvo B9TL BJ11 DSX: **Tyrers Coaches, Manchester**

Volvo B9TL SN57 GMX: **Whealers Travel, Southampton**

To Shelton Motors for scrap

Volvo B7TLs LF52 ZPD, LT52 WXD

Tridents LX05 GHA, LRO2 LYX - the latter was First Essex 33178 - see page 6

Enviro 200s SN08 ACV/AAZ/ABV/AEC

Scania YT59 SHV

Ensignbus Fleet

With reference to last month's notes reporting that the Southend seafront service had always started in May or June, we overlooked that Stephenson's Coaches did run a service in the Easter school holidays for one year only, 1998 (4 to 19 April), however, 29 March, the day that Ensign started this year, remains the earliest that the service has ever run.

The Southend seafront service 68 will now operate every 30 minutes every weekend until the daily service during School Holidays. There will also be two am journeys from Lakeside to Southend & one pm journey back. 371 is seen right ascending Belton Way West, Leigh, on the first Lakeside westbound journey on 17 April 2021 (**John G Lidstone**).

Two Volvo / B9TL Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2s have entered the fleet ex Tower Transit, 138/9 BJ11 DTK/DVR. 138 has been converted to H43/28F.

102/3, LX53 BAA/BBZ, and 981, LX06 EAP, Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Geminis have been sold to Imperial Coaches, Slough.



392, 392 MBF, open-top Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini, was re-registered back to its original mark of LX53 AYY before being sold to First Eastern Counties. FEC have further re-registered it to CRZ 366, and it has received Sema number 37000. This bus had been used on route 68 in Southend last summer. It is for the expanded Great Yarmouth to Hemsby open-top service which now requires three vehicles (previously only one on the Great Yarmouth only service). It joins existing ex-First Essex part open top Dennis Trident / Plaxton President 32905 W905 VLN, which has been re-registered to CRZ 166. (The third vehicle is Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 32348, which was already in the Great Yarmouth fleet, which has been converted to part open top and has been re-registered from LK53 LZL to CRZ 266.) All three have been repainted into an Urban 2 'Coastal Clipper Cabriolet' two-tone blue and yellow livery.

Below: The cover photo of EBN 683 was of one of Ensignbus's new Wrightbus low-height StreetDecks, 166, LX21 CHO, taken at Mardens on 23 February 2021. Below is sister 162, LX21 CHJ, in service, on Amazon route Z2 from Canning Town to Amazon Tilbury, at Rainham Tesco on 19 April. **Thomas Drake**. By sheer co-incidence, its random three registration letters are the same as those issued by Southend in a previous registration system and as illustrated on Westcliff Motor Services / Eastern National Bristol Ks on pages 15 and 17.



Registration Changes

Dennis Trident / Alexander V130 MEV is now BIG 7596.

Volvo B12B / Plaxton SV08 GXP is now VB08 PAN.

The following are all Enviro 200s.

LJ09 KPU is now AB09 PAN. LJ09 KPR is now DB09 PAN.

Previous DB09 PAN to YX10 BDY then to DB10 PAN.

LJ09 KPT is now AS09 PAN, it has been converted to single door, in fleet livery and named 'Albert'. It is seen right on school route 118 at Ramsey Road, Harwich on 28 April 2021. **Stephen Barham**. A photo of it before conversion, repaint and re-registration was in last month's EBN.

LJ09 KRД now VB09 PAN, now in paint and has been converted to single door.



Disposals

DC62 PAN is now YX62 FCA and sold to Taw and Torridge Coaches Ltd.

Previous DB10 PAN is now YX10 BFI and sold to Taw and Torridge Coaches Ltd.

Vehicle Reinstated

Volvo B12B / Transbus DC53 PAN will be reinstated for potential private hires.

Acquired for Spares

SJ57 AAY, ex Stagecoach, fleet number 54039, a Volvo B12BT / Plaxton Panther 15 metre purchased from Ensignbus for spares.

Below: Pink and white Trident with its new registration BIG 7596 at Abbots Road, Dovercourt, on route 18, also on 28 April. **Adam Barham**. This photo links nicely with the table on page 30.



On the last weekday of the Easter school holidays, 9 April, the four Optare Versas still in service all worked into Essex. 148/152 (YK08 EPE/EPV) worked Ipswich - Colchester 93/A, and 149/150 (YK08 EPF/EPJ) worked Colchester routes 4 & 11. From then on, the Versas were largely confined to Ipswich town services, but on 28 April 148 worked on Colchester routes 4 & 11, and on 29/30 April 152 worked on Clacton - Mistley 2/A.

Colchester routes 4 & 11 are normally worked by short ADL Enviro 200, but two standard length (10.8m) examples have been noted, on 15 April 74 (DU60 LOJ), and on 22 April 75 (GD10 MVM).

Optare Versa SR 87 (YI12 GWA) has also worked into Essex. On 13 April 87 was on 0720 Thorington Crossroads - Suffolk Rural College Otley RC1, and on 16 April 1610 Suffolk One College - Colchester 93 and 1715 Colchester - Ipswich 93.

The summer school term commenced on 12 April, therefore Scania double-deckers returned to Ipswich - Manningtree 92, and Ipswich - Colchester 93/A, the usual Scania OmniCities sharing duties with two of the three Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekkas bought new in 2005: 60/61/62 (PJ54 YZT/U/V). The duties for 61 and 62 saw one working an all-day duty on Ipswich - Colchester 93/A, the other working a duty which included 1610 Suffolk One College - Manningtree 92, and 1720 Manningtree - Ipswich 92. 61 and 62 are instantly recognisable due to their light blue/white/green livery, dating from 2013 when they were used to provide additional capacity on the Ipswich Park & Ride service at peak times. Following refurbishment and repaint into the current green / purple livery at Hants & Dorset Trim, 60 returned to service at the end of April. On 28/29 April, 60 worked 1610 Suffolk One College - Manningtree 92 and 1720 Manningtree - Ipswich 92. This enabled sisters 61 and 62 to work all day on 93/A Ipswich - Colchester on these dates. On 30 April, 60 and 62 spent all day on 93/A, and it was the turn of 61 to work the duty that included 1610 Suffolk One College - Manningtree 92 and 1720 Manningtree - Ipswich 92. 61 and 62 are expected to follow 60 to Hants & Dorset Trim for refurbishment and repaint later this year.

The fourth Scania OmniDekka 63 (YN06 TFZ), new to Network Colchester, and reported last month, has been repainted into the current green / purple livery. Fitted with seatbelts, it entered service on contract 2A Feering (New Lane) to Ipswich School on 27/28 April. It is seen below when with Network Colchester at the temporary Colchester Bus Station on 12 April 2011 (**Robert Appleton**).

The three Scania OmniCities obtained last year from RATP London United 46/47/48 (SGZ 3346/47/48) are seatbelt fitted. Normally two work on Ipswich School contracts, and the third on Ipswich town services, but on 20 April 47 spent part of the day on 93/A starting with 1150 Ipswich - Colchester 93, and on 27 April 47 spent all day on Ipswich - Manningtree 92.

The DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlanders mainly work school services and associated journeys. For example, from 12 April, 55 (PN52 XBO) became the regular performer on service 194 at 0811 Langham - East Bergholt High School 194, and 1545 return. In between, 55 worked from East Bergholt to Ipswich and back on service 94. Sister 56 (PN52 XBK) has received the current green / purple livery. 56 also worked into Essex on 30 April when it was the third bus on service 93, working afternoon peak journeys at 1610 Suffolk One College - Colchester 93 and 1715 Colchester - Ipswich 93.



Memories of the Eastern National Fleet in 1958/59

by John Bath

Growing up in the 1950s in Southend and Leigh-on-Sea, my interest in buses was formed from trips to Romford where the early post-war TDs fascinated me, looking so old-fashioned compared with ultra-modern RFs, and to Stonebridge Park where my Aunt & Uncle lived. The Trolleybus depot there (code SE) was the base of many of the very stylish 'spatted' C2 and C3 class trolleybuses with the CUL registrations which seemed to hold sway along the 662 route. These CULs were the first ever bus registrations that I recorded in my very first ABC bus book for 1956.

But it seemed that, at least initially, I had overlooked the fascinating buses on my own doorstep. Though I vaguely recall the brown City buses, and red Westcliff buses, I did not record any details. And yet I would have seen these vehicles daily as I walked from our home on Prittlewell Square, near the much-missed Southend bandstand, to Victoria Avenue Primary School just beyond the old library.

It was not until about 1958, when I discovered a school friend of mine had similar interests, that I often made the 'Saturday pilgrimage' from our second house, now in Blenheim Chase, in Leigh, via my friend David's bungalow in a close near Coombes Corner, to Prittlewell Garage (PL) - a round trip of some seven miles, and always on foot.

It seemed that AECs, less common in 'our area', were my favourite buses, with all the remaining Eastern National examples (all on pre-war chassis) based in either Southend (SD) or PL garages at the time.

Only re-bodied ex-Westcliff Regents JN 4294 (seen right in Southend garage, **Robin Jenkinson**) and JN 4745 (photo on page 28) were active on regular service in the ENOC fleet back in 1958 (and these survived to 1961), but PL held six AECs then exclusively used on workmen's services:

MWV 970/971 (photo on page 27) and NPU 170, Regent I ex-Sheffield

BHJ 132 and BJN 116/119 Regal coaches - the last survivors of the pre-war Westcliff Touring fleet (photos on pages 28-29).

Back in 1958, no Ian Allan ABC book covering the Southend area existed (although it did come soon in 1959 and I was even able to spot the mistakes therein, from my own observations) so information and news was sparse. Therefore, I could not understand, even then, how obviously pre-war looking buses like these MWV / NPU Regents appeared to me have anachronistic post-war registrations (and I still don't understand to this day, though in fairness, the bodywork was rebuilt by local Westcliff firm, Beales.) [Editor's note: the photo caption on page 27 provides a bit more information on this.]

The Regal coaches were superb looking vehicles to my eyes, and in their last months just before disposal via the Maldon disposal park, we were slightly amazed to see them at PL with their new repaint in bus green around 1959.

I do not recall seeing any of these workmen's buses on the road - but I guess I would have been in school at the time they were out on service collecting / delivering workmen.

Another highlight was the unexpected sighting of Daimler / Strachans double-decker ONO 289 (ex-Rose Bros) at PL garage, but we never knew quite what we might find there of interest, hence our frequent visits. A photo of this bus at PL is on page 26.

Much as we liked seeing all the old staggers at PL - notably ex-Westcliff pre-war JN registered (see photo on page 27) and the AECs, we soon decided to venture further afield to see different ENOC vehicles which rarely, if ever, came to our area.

Chelmsford (CF) was the destination of the first of these many trips some time in 1958 and that was of course towards the end of the 'golden days' of the 1950s when children aged 11 or so could roam quite safely with a friend - around Essex, or even London, as I did in both cases.

Many gaps were filled in our books from those local buses on Chelmsford town services, but the most surprising sight to us was pre-war Leyland TD2 trainer, AEV 798, from 1933, with 1946 Beadle body, still with its pre-1954 fleet number plate 3428, which I marked in my notebook as 'preserved' - but of course, it was sadly not retained but instead went for scrap the very next year, in 1959. What a shame



it was not preserved but little was retained outside London in those days. AEV 798 is illustrated on pages 3 & 29. Encouraged by this successful first trip beyond the borough boundary, my friend, David, and I soon ventured on the old City route 251 all the way to Wood Green, at that time costing us each half-a-crown return (12½ pence). This was a bargain, compared with two shillings (10p) return to either Chelmsford or Brentwood, for the much longer journey of about two and half hours - or some five hours for the round trip. And of course, not far from the small ex-City Wood Green ENOC garage (WG) / terminus was the huge Wood Green (WN) LT trolleybus garage.

My friend and I then planned something more ambitious: what if we were to get a Rail Rover ticket and roam all over Essex for a week to see the furthest flung ENOC depots of Dovercourt (DT), Colchester (CR), Halstead (HD), Braintree (BE) and to the north-west of ENOC's territory, the only ENOC garage then in Hertfordshire, Bishops Stortford (BS)?

Well, we did this, all in the summer of 1959, which was just as well, as the pre-war buses were going fast, and even some of the post-war OBs were coming off the fleet. The use of the bus from BE to BS and HD was essential of course without rail links.



Because the post-war Bristol buses were so common, after AECs my next favourites were the Leylands, especially the MPUs which apart from 1121, MPU 52, were mainly on Canvey and around Braintree. I saw 1121 operating from SD, as the lone example of closed-top SD-based Leylands in those days, but the above photo, by **Robin Jenkinson** taken on 15 July 1960, was when it was allocated to CY. Robin wrote on the back of the photo "Factory run - photo starting from the factory - Canvey Island", thought to be what is now called the Charfleets Service Road. The bus was renumbered 2106 in August 1964 and still survives, not far from where this photo was taken, at Canvey Museum.

All ENOC open-toppers at that time were newly converted Leylands, or pre-war Bristols - I had just missed all the ex-Brighton AECs, but I did see the ex-Brighton or Westcliff pre-war Bristols (NJ or JN registered, plus ANJ 831 - recorded incorrectly in the then new ABC as if it were 'local' AIN 831!) at Southend or Clacton.

Pre-war ex-Westcliff Bristol double-deckers with JN / AHJ / AJN / BHJ registrations still abounded in Southend - both ECW and Beadle-bodied - some modernised with lower radiators and new post-war style bodies. I could hardly see above the window from the front nearside lower deck seat of the original 'high-shield' versions, but at least I got a good foot massage from the engine vibrations! It was from these that AJN 825 was very luckily preserved, thanks to the sterling efforts of my good friend, Robin Jenkinson (as told by Robin in EBN 551).

At Maldon, on the way to Clacton, I saw the only JO5G Bristol I ever recorded on a non-workmen's service, GPU 427, and I can't recall why we did not use the Rover ticket for this excursion, although it might have been an earlier trip.

Unaccountably, and with the benefit of hindsight, my friend and I did not visit Canvey (CY) nor Maldon (MN) depots - the latter would no doubt have been as interesting as PL of course, with its gated disposal yard, holding many withdrawn buses in those days. There were many 'rarities' in these remote depots, e.g., the sole 'Dinky Toys-type' Maudslay / Duple coach PTW 623 (222) at BE (see photo on page 27), and we filled in even more gaps in our notebooks.

Luckily for us, the ENOC fleet was probably more varied at this time than any other Tilling fleet with chassis from all these nine makers: Bristol - pre-war and post-war; AEC - pre-war only; Leyland - both pre-war and post-war; Seddon*; Guy*; Daimler*; Maudslay*; Bedford*; Beadle-Bedford*. (* Signifies post-war only at the time.)

The only 'sold out of service' ENOC buses seen were fairly modern looking ex-Hicks Bros Leyland FHK 141 (still with its pre-1958 Chelmsford red triangle garage identity plate) stored in a yard to the east of Southend, off Southchurch Avenue (possibly belonging to Lansdowne), plus LHK 412, an ex-City Leyland coach in service with Maroon Coaches of Woodford.

But my interest was now waning as the increased standardisation of the ENOC fleet made its mark on what was now becoming an almost all-Bristol selection. And in any case, I had noted details of almost the whole fleet, complete with garage codes.

I saw at least one of the new Bristol LD Lodekkas on delivery to Southend at Kent Elms Corner from the PPU series (possibly 49 or 50 PPU) and from the very same location, going in the opposite direction for disposal were utility Bedfords KWW 950 / KTW952 (177/180) with BD plates.

By 1962, just a couple years after my interest had evaporated in favour of train spotting, the fleet largely contained Bristols, plus a surprising number of Leylands, mainly from the City via Westcliff fleet - but the total number of manufacturers was reduced from nine to three, including Daimler, in just three years. N.B. this was all shortly before the influx of Guys and two Commer coaches from the absorbed Moores' fleet in 1963. Examples of this fleet were seen for the first time on that initial Chelmsford trip.

Surprisingly one of the pre-war re-bodied non-City TD4 Titans with ENO registrations also survived to 1964 and there were no less than 20 Leyland double-deckers comprising almost all the then current open-top fleet of 6 and 14 other double-deckers - the open-top exception being ex-Brighton CAP 131 acquired more recently and which I can recall on tree-lopper duties rather later in its life.

And the fleet of ex-City Daimler / Roberts double-deckers made it to 1962, plus the gorgeous 1952 Burlingham Royal Tiger coaches, once the pride of the fleet - from my viewpoint at least.

However, my new-found interest in steam locomotives had taken the place of buses by the early 1960s but there is still time to report on my memories of the Southend Corporation fleet, which will be in a future EBN. I'd like to record my grateful thanks to my good friend **Paul Bateson**, one of EBEG's two members living in Canada but resident in the UK at the time.

Editor's note: thanks also to **Brian Ashley** and **Richard Delahoy** for additional photos to illustrate John's article and for extra information for the captions.

Right: Ex Rose
bros (note the
destination
display) Daimler
Strachans 1222,
ONO 289, at
Prittlewell garage,
just as John
would have seen
it.
EBEG Collection



Right: Following on from 1222, here is 222, PTW 623, a Maudslay Marathon III / Duple FC35F, possibly at the Euston Square Coach Station, London. The date is 24 April 1957. New in 1950, it had been ordered by Hicks but was delivered after the Eastern National takeover, numbered 4108. It was withdrawn in 1962 and to Hutton Boy Scouts May 1963 as a non-PSV. It was a unique vehicle in the ENOC fleet. **Frank Church - EBEG Collection**



Below: MVW 971 in Prittlewell garage yard. An AEC Regent / Weymann H29/24R, new to Sheffield JOC in June 1935, registered BWA 200, fleet number B100. To Benfleet & District and existing body rebuilt (not rebodied) to H29/28R by C W Beale who were a local joinery firm in Westcliff who rebuilt a number of Westcliff and Southend Corporation Transport buses in the immediate post-war era. It was also fitted with a Gardner 5LW engine. It entered service with B&D in May 1948; it had been re-registered prior to entering service with them. To Westcliff Motor Services 2 March 1951 (when Benfleet & District and Canvey & District passed to the British Transport Commission) and to Eastern National as 1172 in January 1955. Next to it is JN 6885, a Bristol JO5G, new in April 1936, with an ECOC B36R body, which became Eastern National 227 in January 1955. **Brian Ashley Collection**





As John mentions, two ex-Westcliff-on-Sea AEC Regent Is, JN 4294 and JN 4745, were active on regular service in the ENOC fleet back in 1958 (and both survived to 1961). The latter, numbered 1169 in 1955, and with Southend depot plates, had been new in October 1934 with a L24/24R Weymann body and had received a new L27/28R ECW body in July 1949. It is seen on Manchester Drive, Leigh-on Sea on route 21.

Brian Ashley Collection



The next in registration sequence, JN 4746, had gone by 1958, but it is seen here when with Westcliff-on-Sea with its original L24/24R Weymann body. It was also new in October 1934 and, like MVW 971, had its existing body rebuilt by C W Beale, in 1946/7. It became 1170 with ENOC in January 1955. It is pictured opposite Prittlewell garage in Fairfax Drive. There were allotments behind where the bus is standing before Prittlewell Chase was extended to join Fairfax Drive at that spot.

Brian Ashley Collection



John also mentions that in 1958 Prittlewell had six AECs then exclusively used on workmen's services, including BHJ 132 and BJN 115/118 Regal coaches - the last survivors of the pre-war Westcliff-on-Sea Touring fleet. Here is the former in its Westcliff days at Gloucester Green bus station, Oxford. It was an AEC Regal I / Duple C30F, new June 1939, which went on to become ENOC 147 in January 1955. In July 1940 it had joined the War Department.

EBEG, Peter Snell Collection



BJN 116, also an AEC Regal I / Duple C30F, new in 1939, which went on to become ENOC 148 in January 1955, so the next in sequence to BHJ 132, seen opposite Prittlewell garage. It had been stored at Pier Hill during the war and was not used until May 1946. As John mentions, it was a surprise to see this and sister BJN 119 repainted in Eastern National bus green. **EBEG Collection**



3428, AEV 798, with its 1946 Beadle body on 1933 Leyland TD2 chassis, on route 105 to Walton passing Hollytrees Museum at the end of Colchester High Street, just before East Hill begins. The car in the background is in the semi-circular road by the War Memorial and main entrance to Colchester Castle Park.

AEV 798 was withdrawn from passenger service in 1952 and became a trainer. Service vehicles do not appear to have had fleet numbers, so the 1954 renumbering passed it by, and it retained its 3428 number plate. It was sold in November 1959 to AMCC, dealer, Stratford. It may well have been the last vehicle in the fleet to have carried a fleet number plate from the original series. It is seen, bottom, at Brentwood garage. Note the blanking plate added below the radiator grille compared to the photo above and the plate on the grille for the 'L' sign (as seen on page 3). The Bristol LWL5G / ECW saloon next to it is from the last batch of these, TTW 570-7, 351-8 in the 1954 numbering scheme.

Both **EBEG Collection**



A List of Tridents with Independent operators in Essex (excluding Ensignbus) as at April 2021

Compiled by Ian Ransom

Operator	Registration
Carter, Great Bromley	LK05 GFV, LK05 GGJ
Don, Great Dunmow	T273 BPR, T274 BPR, T227 BPR, V428 DRA
Ford, Althorne	C7 BUS, S804 BWC, S807 BWC, T90 BUS, T650 KPU, T697 KPU ((for spares), W80 BUS, W90 BUS, LK55 KKF
Fourways, Highwood	LN51 KYC, LN51 KYS, LN51 KYW, LN51 KYP, LN51 KYK
Galleon, Roydon	X336 NNO (withdrawn)
Lodge, High Easter	C20 DGE, E14 BTS, E15 BTS, T278 BPR, V434 DRA, V435 DRA, PF06 EZL, PF06 EZM, PF06 EZN, PF06 EZO, PF06 EZP
M&M, Cooksmill Green	PN04 XDK
New Horizons, Frating	X331 HLL (withdrawn)
Panther, Harwich	BIG 7596
See London, Purfleet	AA51 SEE, AA52 SEE, AA53 SEE, AA54 SEE (all SORN)
SIH, Crays Hill	Y862 GCD
Tendring Travel, Thorpe-le-Soken	X583 USC, X598 USC, SN51 SYH
Travelux, Stanford-le-Hope	T114 KLD (SORN), V749 HBY
Truck & Bus, Rettendon	X312 NNO (withdrawn)
Operator	Previous Registrations
Ford	C7 BUS (S818 BWC); T90 BUS (T694 KPU); W80 BUS (W833 NNJ); W90 BUS (W836 NNJ)
Lodge	C20 DGE (PN04 XDL); E14 BTS (EMN 52Y); E15 BTS (EMN 49Y)
Panther, Harwich	BIG 7596 (V130 MEV)
See London	AA51 SEE (LX06 EYZ); AA52 SEE (LX06 EZB); AA53 SEE (LX06 EZC); AA54 SEE (LX06 EZA)
Operator	New to
Carters	Both Metroline
Don	T-BPR (Bournemouth); V428 DRA (Nottingham)
Ford	All East London except W833/36 NNJ Brighton & Hove, LK55 FFF Metroline
Fourways	All Metroline London Northern
Galleon	Selkent (now open top and in 'Gangster Tours' livery)
Lodge	All Blackpool, except EMN 49/52Y (Isle of Man Transport), T278 BPR (Bournemouth), V434/5 DRA (Nottingham)
M&M	Blackpool
New Horizon	Metroline
Panther	Selkent
See London	All London Central (all now open top and in yellow 'See London By Night' livery)
SIH	Brighton & Hove
Tendring Travel	Lothian
Travelux	Both Metroline London Northern
Truck & Bus	Selkent

Bus Spotting in the Digital Age

Richard Delahoy wonders whether our hobby has become just a little too easy today. Has the mystery and the fun been taken away?

Do you remember the days before the internet, social media, e-mail newsgroups, journey planners, the service registration database, on-line tracking like Bustimes, vehicle data on Bus Lists on the Web, Flickr and the myriad of other resources that we can call on today? These days it is very easy to keep abreast of developments as they happen, research operators and vehicles, find the elusive bus you need to photograph, etc. It wasn't always like this!

As I explained in the March issue, back in September 1971, I had no idea that Eastern National were acquiring 15 Bristol VRs from Scotland until, by chance, I saw one stored at Basildon and was told by a driver about the first one entering service the next day, allowing me to capture the moment. But without that luck, I'd probably not have known anything until the next issue of our News Sheet or 'Buses' magazine appeared, weeks or months after the event.

Even knowing about vehicle transfers didn't make finding and photographing vehicles that easy and I recall one holiday in summer 1981 touring North Wales by car with a friend, in pursuit of the ex-Southdown VRs and Fleetlines that Crosville had acquired and which were spread far and wide across their territory - we saw them in places from Machynlleth to Merseyside, and a similar hunt the following year for the ex-Eastern National VRs that had also migrated to North Wales, leading to my first visit to the Isle of Anglesey.

Today, pictures and news spread like wildfire on social media. It does have its advantages, of course. We needed to photograph First 69421 in service in its new Essex livery for the cover of last month's magazine. In the good old days, we'd probably not even have known that it was out and when word did reach us, would have spent hours hanging around Chelmsford bus station hoping that it would appear and asking drivers or an Inspector (remember them?) if they'd seen it. If very lucky, an inspector might have checked the run-out sheet to see what it was working - or maybe not. Perhaps it wasn't even in service and the visit would have been in vain. But today, photos of the repaint appeared on Flickr even before it had entered service, and then all I had to do was to look at Bustimes - which takes a feed direct from the ticket machine tracking - to see when and where it was. Then it was simply a case of catching an X30 to Chelmsford (paying by contactless card, of course) and hey presto, it appeared exactly when and where I expected it to. Job done. Pity the weather can't be organised so easily . . .

But even today, there are occasions when we can still be surprised and need to resort to the old-fashioned methods, i.e., standing on street corners with a notebook (and digital camera) and using intelligent guesswork to discover what's going on. And that's exactly what I've had to do since last September to unravel the story of the school duplicates being run for Arriva in Southend. We don't get any official information from the

company, so have no lists of the operators, routes, or times. Arriva's website in theory lists all the journeys that have externally operated duplicates, but experience has shown that this is somewhat divorced from reality, and doesn't say which operators are being used, let alone what buses or coaches they are providing. They are not on any publicly accessible tracking, there are no service registrations to help, it really has meant going back to first principles. And in doing so, the element of surprise, fun and even amazement has come back! Also, it changes from day to day, or term to term, so what you see on a particular journey today might be different tomorrow.

I'm tempted to think back to say enthusiasts' experiences of the coaches hired by London Transport to augment central area routes in the immediate post-war years, or the bitter five-and-a-half-week strike by Southend Corporation crews in 1967 when buses and coaches were hired from various operators in a pattern that changed daily, or the early 1980s explosion of commuter traffic and coach hires on Southend Transport's X1 group of services. All required lots of observations on the road to find out what was happening in a fast-changing environment!

So, whilst bus rallies and running days all stopped last year, I had a ready source of curiosity to sustain my interest in the industry through the autumn and winter. I am lucky that many of the duplicates pass Thorpedene Library, just half a mile from home, whilst going into central Southend was also possible for my permitted daily exercise walks, even if a six-mile round trip. Yes, I did succumb to using the car occasionally - to be in Chichester Road by 0650 was too difficult otherwise. And unlike those enthusiasts of the 1940s or 1960s, I could come straight home to look the vehicles up on the net.

And what a fascinating time it has been - and continues to be as I write. But nothing prepared me for perhaps the ultimate surprise, on the first school day after Easter and about to return home for breakfast (via my second vaccine jab) to find a coach from Travellers Choice of Carnforth (that's Lancashire, on the edge of the Lake District, by the way) on a duplicate that wasn't even listed in Arriva's publicity. Or to find two more coaches from the same operator running that afternoon. Or then, having made an educated guess as to where they might be based, to find five of their coaches parked at the Premier Inn on the A127 in Westcliff, by the Tesco roundabout.

Since last September I've made 95 observations and as a direct result, have seen and photographed 52 buses and coaches that I never expected to see on local bus work in Southend, with little or no help from digital sources. I recognise that I'm lucky to have all this happening on my doorstep and can leave home - subject of course to the prevailing restrictions - and not all EBN readers will have been so fortunate. But it has enabled me to recapture some of the excitement and fun of spotting the old-fashioned way!

From the COLOUR Archives - Westcliff DJN 558

by Richard Delahoy

With our centre spread featuring Bristol K types this month, it seems highly appropriate to feature one in our colour section, with another of Frank Church's 1953 prints. A Westcliff photo from 1953 also ties in nicely with John Bath's 1950s article on pages 24-29. The photo acts as a reminder that Westcliff Motor Services was a red company, in contrast to Eastern National's green, although both were members of the Tilling Group. The Westcliff red was however to give way to EN green, the last bus delivered in red being Bristol KSW FIN 159, new in September 1952. DJN 558 seen here was new in November 1950 and was a rare Bristol KS6B - the KS was a slightly lengthened K type, at 27' rather than 26', but still only 7' 6" wide, a half-way house before deliveries of the 8' wide KSW type started. Both EN and Westcliff took a mix of 5-cylinder Gardner and 6-cylinder Bristol engines for their post-war K types. Our subject here was allocated EN number 1346 in July 1954 ahead of transfer to EN in January 1955; it became 2303 in the August 1964 scheme and lasted until November 1967. The location is Broadway Market in Southend, a street off Victoria Avenue close to Victoria Station that was the terminus of many of Westcliff's more local services. Come the 1955 Co-ordination Agreement with Southend Corporation, operation of the 7/8 group passed to SCT's blue buses and remains with Arriva today. Broadway Market was obliterated by the late 1960s town centre redevelopment.

Photo Captions

Inside Rear Cover

Further to EBN 684, HCT's new electric BYD / Enviro 400EV 2550e entered service on 13 April 2021, with 2551e following on 19th, mainly on school route 616. The first report of one on route 20 was 2551e on the morning of 29th with 2550e following on 1 May. In complete contrast to the photo above, HCT's brand new 2550e is seen turning from Willingale Road into The Broadway, approaching the Debden terminus in Burton Road on 1 May 2021. The blind was scrolling because the driver had set it to wind to Walthamstow Central for the return journey. **Andrew Colebourne**

Rear Cover

Not previously illustrated in colour in EBN is the mainly white First Essex Urban 2 livery that preceded the new green livery, which was applied to only three vehicles, 69429, 69432 and 69434. Top photo is of 69429 on route 42 on 8 April 2021. **Richard Delahoy.** Bottom photo shows 69432 on route 42A on 28 April. **Robert Appleton.** Both photos taken at Chelmsford Bus Station.

Below: AJK of Barkingside, ex Dan's Luxury Coaches of Waltham Abbey, Yutong TC9 midi-coach YC15 WCT, on the Colchester High School and Colchester Royal Grammar School service, at Southway, Colchester, 10 March 2021. Behind is Stephensons 200, X400 MTT, a Volvo B10M / Plaxton Paragon. **John Podgorski**







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Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964