



Invicta

Number 835

February 2022



Issued monthly by

THE M&D AND EAST KENT BUS CLUB

mdekbusclub.blogspot.com

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Website : <https://mdebusclub.blogspot.com>

e-mail newsgroup : <http://groups.google.com/group/mdebusclub>

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Invicta is compiled and published for current Club members. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy, but the Club and its officers are not responsible for any errors in reports.

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Invicta reports should be sent to the Editor at 42 St Alban's Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP3 9NG (e-mail : editor@mdebusclub.org.uk), or directly to sectional compilers as shown. The deadline for the next issue is **Tuesday 22nd March**.

Scanned topical photographs are welcomed by e-mail. We can only publish pictures supplied directly; we cannot copy pictures from social media platforms without the express consent of the photographer. To avoid system overload, please limit submissions to a maximum of three low-definition attachments per message. We shall come back to you if we need a higher-definition file for publication.

LOCAL MEETINGS

Monday 14th March at 1930 : Maidstone and Medway meeting in the upstairs room of the "Bush" public house in Rochester Road, Aylesford, ME20 7BS. Members are invited to bring photographs on any digital media, or slides by prior arrangement. There is an attendance charge of £2.50 to cover hire of the room. Further information can be obtained from our Area Organiser, Jeff Tucker, at jeff.tucker047@gmail.com. Our apologies that the date of the February meeting was stated incorrectly last month, because of a communication failure. Meetings are normally scheduled for the second Monday of the month.

Front cover illustration : Go-Coachhire have adorned ex-Abellio 9506 with an allover display for the Kent County Council Plan Bee project, as shown in this view near Littlebrook on "The Bridge" complex on 20th January. Their operation of the AZ service will be coming to an end at the start of April.
Darren Walker

CLUB NOTICES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING : As *Invicta* closes for printing, it looks likely that we shall be able to proceed with the AGM as planned on 12th March, and we look forward to being able to welcome members once again. Whilst most Covid guidance is expected to have been withdrawn by the time of the meeting, we shall still be making some changes to the hall layout to enable better circulation, post-meeting refreshments will be pre-plated (as in 2020) and we are seeking maximum ventilation for the hall. Hand sanitizer will be available, and we ask that all members are tolerant regarding the decisions of others whether or not to wear a face covering.

The occasion has traditionally been open to non-members before and after the formal meeting to enable them to visit the sales stand, but this year their access may need to be restricted if levels of member attendance make this necessary.

As mentioned in the Stagecoach news section below, there have been significant issues with anti-social behaviour at Sturry Road Park & Ride site, culminating in the closure of the terminal building at weekends since the start of February (although the bus service continues as per current timetable).

As mentioned on the front of the enclosed Annual Report, the usual pre-AGM bus service will operate from St George's Lane at 1210 and Canterbury West Station at 1215, returning in good time for the start of the meeting.
Chris Duncombe Secretary

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE BULLETIN : The Management Committee met at Faversham on 22nd January. Among the topics discussed were :

- Extensive discussions regarding the AGM, particularly revised arrangements for the hall layout and the potential for emergency changes if the Covid situation changed. This also included how to handle previous anomalies in how membership awards have been calculated.
- An update on the sorting and onward sale of the two large bequests the Club had received in summer 2021. An occasional reminder on how best to go about this will be included in a future issue of *Invicta*.
- Proposals received for events for the Club 70th anniversary were discussed at length, and a number of options chosen for further development. Details will follow in due course as events are firmed up, but we hope that they will include vehicle-based tours, a Jubilee lunch, and a 1972 Enthusiasts' Guide (please see the following notice).
- Various topics covering relationships with other like-minded enthusiast groups. Editorial exchanges have been arranged with two other societies since 2020, and further proposals are in hand to swap advertising material where it may be mutually beneficial.

The next full meeting is scheduled to take place in Hemel Hempstead on 23rd April, although the procedural meeting to appoint Officers for the year will take place immediately after the AGM.
Chris Duncombe Secretary

ENTHUSIASTS' GUIDE 1972 : Members will note the plan above to issue a retrospective Enthusiasts' Guide for 1972, following the pattern of the 1952 and 1962 volumes for our 50th and 60th anniversaries. Unfortunately your Editor has drawn a complete blank so far in obtaining any photographs from his usual sources, without which the item cannot proceed. If there is anyone out there with topical pictures of M&D, East Kent or Maidstone Corporation vehicles for 1972 (up to and including August), whether colour or monochrome, please make yourself known!

OTHER NOTICES : This section is included as a service to members. The Club accepts no responsibility for any goods or services offered.

- South East Bus Festival : Saturday 2nd April. As well as a large display of buses and coaches, plenty of sales-stands, model bus displays and a frequent free bus service around the showground, there will be talks by three guest speakers, each of around thirty minutes' duration. The event's organisers are very grateful to Stephen Morris, the former Editor of *Buses* magazine, Austin Blackburn of Go-Coachhire and Neil Barker of The Bus Archive for giving up their valuable time. There will also be a live slide show presented by Terry and Roy Blackman, plus a continuous slide show that will play through the event that has been put together by Mike Hodges. A presentation will be given by Richard Bourne of the Friends of Chatham Traction and Chris Bichard of South East Coachworks about the restoration of Weymann-bodied Bristol K5G GKE 68. Admission to the event will cost £12 at the gate or £10 if bought in advance online. Children under the age of fourteen will be admitted free of charge and each bus and coach attending will be allowed four free admissions upon arrival. For full details of the event, including how to enter a vehicle, a list of the current entries, how to buy tickets in advance and lots more information can be viewed at <https://southeastbusfestival.wixsite.com/sebf>.
- Darryl Meades is keen to acquire a copy of FLB23 (the August 2006 Enthusiasts' Guide), preferably unmarked. If anyone is willing to sell him a copy, please make contact on darryl.meades@gmail.com.
- Arthur White, the owner of ex-Stockport Leyland-National YFY 4M (masquerading as an East Kent vehicle), wishes to acquire a cash box of the type fitted to most vehicles at Ashford in the 1980s. Please contact him at The-Hitchhiker@outlook.com if you can help.
- We are advised that the Faversham Transport Through Time event is scheduled for Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th May. As usual, the Saturday will see free bus services around the area, whilst the Sunday will be for classic cars. The Kent & East Sussex Railway bus rally will take place at Tenterden on 21st August, and will see both static displays and free bus services around the area. Both occasions are subject to confirmation nearer to the time, should there be a recurrence of pandemic restrictions. Anyone wishing to enter a vehicle at either event is invited to message Noel Young on noelmyoung@yahoo.co.uk.
- A reminder that the Club has a large number of A4-sized National Express coach guides available, for a donation to Club funds. They cover much of the period from the 1970 to the 2000s, often with supplements. A small selection will be available at the AGM and the South East Bus Festival, but any members with a particular interest, either for a specific edition or more generally, are invited to contact the Secretary on secretary@mdebusclub.org.uk.

OVERVIEW

We should like to thank several members who have written in complimentary terms, unanimously favourable, about the new *Invicta* cover design. Longer-standing members will realise that the purple background cover is a nod towards the standard Club house colour in its earlier days.

Proposals are starting to emerge for post-pandemic network revisions, ahead of Government decisions about any recovery funding. Known details are included under the appropriate headings, but should be treated as provisional at this stage. It is a factual

comment, rather than in any sense political, that a great deal seems to depend on whatever is uncorked by the Government, and most operators seem to be staying their hand until that is known.

Meanwhile, decisions are also awaited on broader forward funding for the industry (page 21/350 refers). It is certainly clear that the initial Bus Strategy promise last year of £3bn has been watered down to £1.2bn, against declared bids from local authorities exceeding £7bn, and that funding will have to be spread fairly selectively across the bids. Readers who wish to keep themselves informed will find fuller detail in the national enthusiast press – and should not necessarily believe all that is starting to be suggested as the local press gets hold of the tale.

Storm Eunice, probably the most ferocious since the “great hurricane” of October 1987, battered Kent and East Sussex, and indeed all of the south, on 18th February.

Arriva withdrew most services from mid-morning, and others as the day progressed. At one stage 277 was running via Pembury Road in Tunbridge Wells because of fallen trees in Ferndale and Sandrock Road. Maidstone Park & Ride continued, but diverting via Tonbridge Road and Hermitage Lane because of a fallen tree on London Road; this also applied to 71, 71A and 72 when they resumed. See also “temporary diversions” re 166. Services resumed in stages during the afternoon, though 5 did not run south of Staplehurst, and other short-term diversions took place because of fallen trees.

Stagecoach withdrew all operations from about 1000 until late afternoon; in general, outside this period, inter-urban routes were mostly restricted to single-deckers, leading to the use of double-deckers on in-town services. When operations resumed, services could only run at Ashford on AD, B (but turning at Trinity Road in Kennington, not serving Towers View), C (direct via Hythe Road, not serving Twelve Acres) and G (not serving Repton Park, Manor Road or Alfred Road). In the Canterbury and Swale area, there were limited services on 3, 22A, 25A and Triangle, with 3 operating via Rough Common, Blean and Thanet Way between Canterbury and Brenley Corner because of a road closure at Boughton. At Dover, only a limited service was possible on 15 because of road closures and debris; it is unclear whether any other routes were workable. At Eastbourne, limited services were proposed on 1/1A, 3, 4, 5 and Loop; Gildredge Road and Cornfield Road could not be used because of slates being below off the station roof, so buses used Cavendish Road and Grove Road. 51 resumed at about 2000, but only between Eastbourne and Hailsham. At Folkestone, limited services were planned on 16, 71, 73, 76 and 102 (only as far as Littlestone). At Hastings, limited services ran on 20, 21, 21A, 22, 22A, 22C, 26, 26A, 28 (but omitting The Ridge between Chowns Hill and Elphinstone Road) and 98 (Hastings to Bexhill only), plus the last three journeys on 100 and 101. At Thanet, there were limited services on 8, 32, 34 and 48; contract BK1 did not run at all. Reports suggest that planned resumptions did not actually occur in every case.

Nu-Venture announced during the morning the suspension of all services until at least 1500 for the safety of their passengers and staff, and resumption was affected by numerous instances of roads blocked by fallen trees and other debris. Battle Area Community Bus suspended B74, ASD Coaches suspended operations from around 1200, with 170 and 197 (but not 783) resuming later, Chalkwell abandoned operations at about 1200 for the rest of the day. Other operators doubtless also withdrew for the duration.

Various diversions were improvised, and the closure of the M2 Medway bridge, because of an over-turned HGV, also put pressure on the use of routes such as the A228 and A289 for necessary diversions, with consequent delays.

Some disruption was still evident on 19th February, particularly in the Maidstone area. Smiths Hill remained blocked, so Nu-Venture 23 was being diverted via Hunton.

“ARRIVA SOUTHERN COUNTIES” AREA

The following vehicle information remains outstanding :

6201 internal Sapphire staircase vinyl (if any).

Grateful thanks to Phil Shafe, from Ruislip (!), for clearing the previous long-standing queries.

From 30th January, printed receipts are no longer being issued for on-board contactless payments. However, customers can view their transaction history on-line.

All adult single fares were increased by 10p from 20th February, with corresponding increases in some (but not all) associated period and multiple tickets.

ARRIVA KENT & SURREY

VEHICLES IN : Further to page 21/234, Arriva Midlands 4003 was sold for scrap in November, so will not become 6140 here, nor will 6520 pass to Arriva Midlands in exchange, more than a year after that exchange was intended.

Four Optare M950/Optare Solo B31F+12 (adaptable to B28F+12+1) are in course of transfer from Arriva Northumbria, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear (2801/2/10/21) :

1524	(YK08 ERO)	SABFW3AF08R193216	new 5/08
1525	(YK08 ERU)	SABFW3AF08R193217	5/08
1526	(YK08 ETA)	SABFW3AF08R193225	5/08
1527	(YK08 ETX)	SABFW3AF08R193236	6/08

1524/6 were collected from Blythe on 16th February and are in new livery; 1525/7 are awaited. They were new to Arriva Durham County, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear (2801/2/10/21). Unladen weight is 6680kg.

VEHICLES ON LOAN : 1019 was in use by Arriva Kent Thameside as a crew ferry at Southend on 31st January, apparently covering accident damage to 1000. It was last noted at TW on 28th January, and was still at Southend on 6th February.

ALLOCATIONS : Latest changes are :

1558	RES-RESw	31.1.22
1606	TW-TWw	31.12.21
1628	TW-TWw	31.1.22
4122	GL-GLw	31.1.22
4298	M-GL	31.1.22
6131	TW-TWw	31.1.22

1521 entered service at TW on 18th January. 1524 entered service at TW on 21st February (tracking as 6259). If 3987 has entered service at GL yet, it has not been reported. 1635/6 had moved from GL to M by 21st February.

Reserve fleet. 6200 remained in store at TW on 15th February.

6201 remains last reported in use at M (though questionably so) on 27th September.

8001 remains last reported in store at TW on 9th January.

VEHICLES OUT : Correcting page 22/6, 3737/8 were returned to Kent County Council, Aylesford, Kent “on paper” during period ending 31st December.

1558, 1606, 3733 and 3821 have been sold to Hardwick, Carlton, South Yorkshire (dealer). 1558 was last reported stored at GF on 17th January. 3733 was taken from GL on 26th January. 1606 was taken from TW on 16th February, having remained in service until 11th February. There are no reports for 3821.

4122 was transferred to Arriva Kent Thameside on 26th January. We do not have a date for its physical move.

LIVERY : Further repaints into new livery at Gillingham are 4267 and 4269 in December, 1650, 4289, 4291, 4293 and 4299 in January, 1653, 4221, 4292, 6478, 6479 and 6481 in February. 6478/9/81 lost Sapphire livery and 101 branding. 4267/9 lost Sapphire branding. 4289/91-3/9 lost hybrid livery. 1650/3 lost their route lettering. It is noteworthy that work now seems to be concentrated on Gillingham’s own vehicles, with no more from Maidstone passing through.

Route branding. 4127-9 lost their Park & Ride branding by 21st February, remaining in use still in their dinosaur wraps (at least for the time being).

PROPERTY : During week commencing 17th January, a number of trucks and vans appeared on the former Sheerness depot site, delivering and unloading fence panels. During that week a fence was constructed which extended out across the pavement, including within it the bus stop shelter, although no use has been made of that extra footprint yet. The existing concrete blocks were moved to enable this to be done, and the bus stop flag was moved to the pavement side of the fence. Several box van trucks (with drawbar trailers) were then parked on site for a while, presumably by the new owner; those have now gone. There has been no activity since, although an Iveco truck (NX55 KYF) has been put back to block the entrance gates, remaining so on 15th February. A planning application has now been made to Swale Borough Council for a change of use to a vehicle servicing and repair business, and construction of an additional workshop unit.

GENERAL : 6205 still has cove panel displays in the lower saloon for Sapphire route X3 between Leicester and Market Harborough. 6204 is confirmed as having no lower saloon staircase display. 1524 has a rear internal picture of Bamburgh Castle for MAX service X18. It is pointed out that several vehicles transferred recently from Essex or Surrey still carry local publicity and advertising in the saloons.

Further vehicles have received local embellishments at Tunbridge Wells. 1656/9, the only StreetLites to have received garage codes so far, have these ahead of the entrance, rather than behind it. There are doubtless other individual treatments.

We understand that 2483 will shortly be re-numbered 1523.

SERVICE VEHICLES : T28 (LJ08 CVC) from Arriva London North was at GLt on 26th and 29th January, and T83 (LJ59 AAE) from Arriva London South on 29th January, T28 in red and T83 in new training livery. We wait to learn whether they are formal transfers or loans. Both are Alexander Dennis Trident/Alexander Dennis Enviro400 of 2008 (T28) and 2009 (T83). T83 is reported locally as having come from Arriva Kent Thameside at Hemel Hempstead, though there is no record of it having been based there; perhaps that was simply a staging point following its conversion as a driver trainer at Milton Keynes.

V076 was transferred to M during period ending 31st December.

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSALS : TUI 4739 (2878) – Arriva the Shires, Thurmaston, Leicestershire (2878); re-numbered 3700 at unknown date; withdrawn 1/22.
TUI 4841 (2880) – De-Luxe, Drakelow, Derbyshire 12/21 ex Hardwick, Carlton, South Yorkshire (dealer).
GK52 YUY (3935), GN04 UFX (3960), GN04 UGA-C (3963-5) – Hardwick, Carlton, South Yorkshire (dealer) 12/21 ex Arriva Kent Thameside, Maidstone, Kent (3935/60/3-5). Most of these remained in service pending commissioning of replacements from the closure of Guildford depot. 3960 was collected 2/22, 3963 was collected 1/22. 3935 remained in service on 14th February, 3964/5 appear to have now been withdrawn.
GK52 YVG (T942) – Arriva Kent Thameside, Maidstone, Kent (T942); withdrawn 1/22.
GN04 UDG (1613) – Arriva Kent Thameside, Maidstone, Kent (1613); loaned to Ware 1/22.
GN04 UDJ (1615) – Hardwick, Carlton, South Yorkshire (dealer) 1/22 ex Arriva Kent Thameside, Maidstone, Kent (1615).
GN06 EVU (3737), GN06 EWC (3738) – Kent County Council, Aylesford, Kent (as lessor); sold privately 12/21.
BU06 HSL (3897), BX56 VTW (3903) – Hardwick, Carlton, South Yorkshire (dealer); parked at Wealden PSV, Five Oak Green, Kent (dealer) 2/22 (presumably since 12/21) pending possible onward sale. 3897 since reported at Brown, Crawley, West Sussex (Crawley Luxury Coaches) and re-painted white, 2/22.
YJ57 EJN (1507) – Arriva Kent Thameside, Maidstone, Kent (1507); withdrawn 1/22.
YJ57 EKF (2401) – Arriva Kent Thameside, Maidstone, Kent (2401); re-allocated to Ware 1/22 (but loaned back to Harlow for a few days at the end of the month).
BF67 WGD (1009) – Arriva Kent Thameside, Maidstone, Kent (1009); confirmed moved to Colchester 1/22.
BF67 WGM (1014) – Arriva Kent Thameside, Maidstone, Kent (1014); confirmed returned to Southend 1/22.
SN67 WUL (4122) – Arriva Kent Thameside, Maidstone, Kent (4122); allocated to reserve fleet 1/22; stored at Southend by 2/22.
SN67 WUP (4125) – Arriva Kent Thameside, Maidstone, Kent (4125); moved in store back to Southend 1/22 and used as a crew ferry there on at least one day.
Latest reports for disposal vehicles : None.

ROUTE CHANGES : Maidstone Borough Council confirmed its intention not to increase funding for the Park & Ride service to the level now requested by Arriva. It was accordingly de-registered from **20th February**. Privately-preserved VKE 566S ran over the route on 19th February, its last day. We understand that others were due, but understandably withdrew because of the weather situation. Signage was noted being removed during the day even before the last journeys had run, and tracking seems to have been switched off, although reports are that 4127/8 performed the last rites.

Sunday 155 and 401 have been de-registered from **3rd April** pending the outcome of current KCC tendering. 6A, 11 and the Borstal to Maidstone section of 155 have been de-registered from **17th April**. From the same date, 71A will be withdrawn between Lunsford Park and Leybourne Park, all journeys now being on 71 with a reduced broad Mon-Sat daytime headway of 20min (40min for Snodland), 281 will be reduced to a broad Mon-Sat daytime headway of 15min, 7 will be reduced to a broad daytime headway of 30min on Mon-Fri, and minor changes will be introduced on 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 218/219, 277, 334/341 and 402 group. 7 and 402 will now have a combined Mon-Sat daytime headway of 15min between Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.

Outsourced work. There remain no reports since 11th November about Grange Travel duplicating 689 at Medway (incidentally, the timetable tab of bustimes.org only shows the afternoon journey as current, though tracking reveals a single AKS vehicle in the mornings). As we go to press, Redwing (who are now under new ownership) are reported to have been running a duplicate to the morning 286 until 11th February.

Temporary diversions. On **29th and 30th January** part of the A249 was closed northbound and 334 was diverted via Chestnut Street. Extensive delays ensued.

A burst water main closed the A28 at St Michael's, Tenterden on **31st January**. 12 variously terminated at/commenced from St Michael's or Tenterden by diverting via Benenden Road and Cranbrook Road.

The A20 Ashford Road, Maidstone was closed to westbound traffic between Huntsman Lane and Square Hill Road from **14th to 18th February** for drainage work. Park & Ride and 4 to Maidstone Town Centre were diverted via Huntsman Lane, Vinters Road and Sittingbourne Road.

By **14th February** a road closure was in place between East Peckham roundabout and Wateringbury. A diversion was in place via Seven Mile Lane and Mereworth.

By **16th February** New Hythe Lane was closed, with apparent diversion via Kingfisher Road.

By **16th February**, 72 was noted diverting on the A20 Maidstone-bound to Larkfield, believed to be because of road works closing Chapman Way. This was still in place on **18th February**.

From the evening of **16th February** Luton Road, Chatham was closed because of a burst water main in the Luton High Street area. Buses followed their usual diversions into and out of Street End Road (164 not affected). However, at least one journey on 177 turned into Churchill Avenue rather than Wayfield Road, and turned at the Street End Road roundabout rather than going on to the Capstone Road roundabout, perhaps because it was being worked by a "short" SLF. On 18th February, 166 was noted returning from Lordswood to Chatham via Walderslade Woods and Bridgewood, though this may have been compounded by a fallen tree at Waterworks Hill. Normal working was not expected until **21st February**; in the event it seems to have resumed during **19th February**.

From **17th February** for 16 days The Tideway, Rochester is closed for re-surfacing between 0700 and 1900 from a point south of The Fairway to Pilot Road/The Tideway south of Arethusa Road. No official information has been posted for the 145 diversion, though this is probably via Arethusa Road, City Way, St William's Way and Fairlead Road, omitting the Orion Road loop. It is less clear what will happen with school services when they resume after the half-term break.

ROUTE WORKING : Peak vehicle requirements at 31st January were **GL** 38 DD, 32 midibus, 27 SD (total 97); **M** 36 DD, 27 midibus (total 63); **TW** 19 DD, 18 midibus, 2 SD (total 39). The overall total is therefore 199 vehicles.

We understand that operation of 347, 349 and 647 was transferred from GL to M from 20th February.

AROUND THE AREAS : **Maidstone area.** 3982 was relatively unusual on Park & Ride on 18th January. 4127 on 334 on 30th January was a rare appearance of a Park & Ride vehicle in Sittingbourne; 4128 had previously done so on 12th September (see page 21/268).

Tunbridge Wells area. By 20th January the building on the right-hand side of the depot (as viewed from the gates) appeared to be out of use. Vehicles normally housed inside were all now outside, the window-blinds were drawn, the shutters were down and

the lights were off. Many more vehicles were parked in the yard, which consequently looked a great deal more crowded. At this stage it is not known whether the building has been mothballed, closed or sold.

6238 and 6432 were unusual as the two vehicles on 6X for part of 17th February.

ARRIVA KENT THAMESIDE

(Northfleet operation only; outside formal coverage)

6155 is adaptable to H41/25F+20+1 and has unladen weight 11960kg.

1615 was withdrawn and sold to Hardwick, Carlton, South Yorkshire (dealer) during period ending 31st January in place of the intention to dispose of 1631. It last tracked in service on 25th January.

433 and 489 have been de-registered on Sundays from 3rd April pending the outcome of current KCC tendering. From the same date, revised timetables are proposed on Fastrack A and B, including diversion of A in Dartford via William Munday Way and Burroughs Drive, also a double-run to serve the Amazon LCY3 site, and a night service between Dartford and Greenhithe *Station*. Four journeys each way are proposed on AZ between Gravesend and Amazon LCY3 at shift-change times, daily. From 17th April, 455 has been de-registered, 477 will be withdrawn between Bluewater and Dartford on Mon-Sat during the day and altogether in the evening and on Sundays, and there will be minor changes on 414, 423, 481 and 489.

The peak vehicle requirement at 31st January was 3 DD, 3 MB, 21 midibus, 25 SD (total 52).

ARRIVA KENT & SUSSEX

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSALS : R117 TKO (1117) – Baker, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset (95) 10/09 ex Pickford, Chippenham, Wiltshire (as dealer); returned to Pickford 11/09, then as published previously.

Latest reports for disposal vehicles : 1/22 – WKO 137S (5137).

ARRIVA MEDWAY TOWNS

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSALS : P221 LKK (1221) – NBM Hire, Penrith, Cumbria; gone for scrap 10/21.

P223 LKK (1223) – Happy Days, Stafford, Staffordshire (129); withdrawn 10/20.

GN07 AVO (3825) – Hardwick, Carlton, South Yorkshire (dealer) 12/21 ex Arriva Kent Thameside, Maidstone, Kent (3825). It remained in service pending commissioning of replacement from the closure of Guildford depot but appears to have now been withdrawn.

Latest reports for disposal vehicles : None.

MAIDSTONE & DISTRICT

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSALS : SKR 556R (3556) – M. Chantler, Headcorn, Kent and N. Gardener, Tunbridge Wells, Kent (preservation) 2/18, ex sole ownership of Gardner.

Latest reports for disposal vehicles : 12/21 – OKO 816G (6); 1/22 – SKR 556R (3556).



STAGECOACH SOUTH EAST (EAST KENT)

VEHICLES ON LOAN : 36327-9/35 remain on loan to Channel Tunnel at Folkestone (36327 last reported remaining out of use long-term at Thanet on 17th October).

44019/20, previously on loan to Cambus, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, have now been declared as formal transfers.

ALLOCATIONS : The following have taken place :

18169	RES-RESw	5.2.22
34442	RES-HS	5.2.22
34545	RES-RESw	5.2.22
34650	A-RES	17.1.22
35237	HS-RES	5.2.22
36366	RES-A	12.1.22
44019/20	RES-RESw	5.2.22
47118	DO-RES	5.2.22

Subsequently 47682 appears to have been taken out of use at A, last in service on 30th January and noted in store at HB on 5th February, still on 19th February.

Reserve fleet. 15335 remains last reported in store at EB on 5th October.

15777 returned to store at HB from repairs at an outside contractor on 25th January.

17528 remains last reported in store at TH on 13th November.

17529 remains last reported in store at TH on 20th November.

27891 was back in store at HB on 22nd January after body repairs elsewhere, but by 29th January had moved to A for repaint.

34442 remained in use at EB until 4th February.

34498 remained in store at HB on 19th February.

34542 moved in store to DO on 21st January, entering use there on 7th February.

34625 remained in store at HB on 19th February.

34650 was in store at A on 22nd January.

34659 remained in store at HB on 19th February.

34697 remained in store at HB on 19th February.

The current location of 35237 is not reported, presumed in store at HS.

The store location or status otherwise of 44013 remains unreported.

47118 has been out of use at DO since 6th January and remained in store there on 21st February.

47680 remains last reported in store at A on 15th January.

47683 remains last reported in store at EB (no date), never having been used there.

Withdrawn. 18169 remained stored at TH on 20th January.

34545 remained stored at HB on 19th February.

34548 remains last reported as stored at TH on 18th November, though suspected to be an unidentifiable vehicle seen on 10th February.

47117, 47669 remain last reported as stored at A on 15th January.

VEHICLES OUT : 44019/20 have now been formally transferred to Cambus, as mentioned above. We shall back-date this to their departure last November.

15030/1/5/48 have now been accepted by East London, Canning Town, Greater London following their departure from Kent as noted last month. 15034, last reported stored at Portsmouth (Stagecoach (South) on 24th November, was towed away towards London on 14th February. 15032/73 remained stored at HB on 19th February, 15033 remained stored at TH on 17th February; these three are expected to follow to London.

Of previous sales, 18477 remained stored at HS on 16th February; 34410 remained stored at TH on 17th February; 34541 remained stored at HB on 19th February; 34778 was confirmed remaining stored at HS on 9th February, but is reported to have been taken on 14th February; 47661/76 remained stored at A on 7th February but are reported as taken during that week.

LIVERY : Further repaints into new local bus livery are 15904, 18529, 19654*, 19668*, 26248, 36900* in January, 15561, 27891, 36870 in February. 15553 follows. Those marked * were done at Eastbourne, the rest at Ashford. This is the fourth repaint for 15561; many others of the batch are still on their first.

Major advertisements. 15288 and 15290 had received allover rear displays for Flexi tickets by 19th February.

Route branding. 26248 lost Loop branding at repaint.

10708 remained still with Wave maps on 14th February.

To confirm, 47173 and 47685 seem to be the last vehicles remaining operational with Little & Often branding at Ashford.

GENERAL : Further to page 22/11, the new-style blue-bordered timetable cases have been in use for about four years now, although only reported very recently. They are only being fitted in situations where the case needs changing, usually as a result of damage, but also where the County Councils have provided new modular poles, so as to keep things looking uniform. Even then, they tend to be used on the aluminium-finished poles. On poles of other colours (usually black), black cases tend to be used. A few new black poles received blue cases in error when they were fitted by the supplier. It is only the timetable displays that are being replaced with those having blue backgrounds if the timings have actually changed. However, in the quest to provide clearer and more detailed information to customers, the new format displays are often less space-efficient than the old ones. In such instances the cases have had to be changed to longer examples, which is why more new blue cases have appeared recently. Red timetable cases were fitted to KCC stops; those will be changed eventually, but there is no time-scale for that work. Thank you to John Pugh for this clarification.

Although external mapping has been modified or removed on Wave vehicles, some apparently still have cove panel displays in the saloons for the full former route from Dover to Hastings. It would be useful to know whether former Breeze, Triangle and Loop vehicles (at both Eastbourne and Thanet) also still have such internal displays, especially former Triangle and Wave vehicles which have moved from their original allocations.

The paintshop at Eastbourne is again dealing with repaints for London. 12271/3/92 and 12306 from Selkent are known recent examples.

SERVICE VEHICLES : 34651 remained on loan to Stagecoach Devon, Exeter, Devon on 19th January, now running at Torquay.

Withdrawn 27516 remained stored at EB on 25th January.

Dotto train 97750 and five unidentified trailers remained in store at EB on 25th January. 97752 and the sixth trailer were presumably inside, though reports have been lacking in detail for some time.

34657 remained stored at EB on 25th January pending collection by its new owner, but had gone by 16th February (probably on 14th February).

Further to page 22/11, 91168 came from Cambus, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire. It was allocated as a pool car whilst at HO, though seeing little use in that role, then as a pool car (replacing 93057) at Hastings.

Hired Vauxhall van DP70 AAJ was noted at HS on 10th February.

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSALS : CFN 121 – Vintage Vehicle Hire, Mattersey, Nottinghamshire; change of address to Wincobank, South Yorkshire 12/21

FFN 399 – Friends of the East Kent, Deal, Kent (preservation) 1/22 ex A. Lead, Finglesham, Kent (preservation). One report quotes it as with farmers at Ash, Kent earlier in its career, but we have no record of that; can anyone advise, please?

EFN 178L (1178) – M. Bean, Dymchurch, Kent (preservation) 1/22 ex East Kent Nostalgic Bus & Coach Trust, Folkestone, Kent (preservation); still on the site of the latter at Swingfield Minnis 2/22 in poor condition.

M410 BFG (8410) – Bugler, Clutton, Somerset; scrapped 12/15 (superseding previous reports).

LV52 HFT (17585) – Marshopper, Seaford, East Sussex (Seven Sisters Bus & Coach) (109); loaned to Compass Bus, Worthing, West Sussex 2/22.

LV52 HFW (17587) – Shelton Motors, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire (dealer) 1/22 for scrap ex Ensign, Purfleet, Essex (dealer).

PX55 EGC (34794) – Hulley, Baslow, Derbyshire (11); gone for scrap by 4/21.

FJ56 OBU (59207) – Drew Wilson, Carlisle, South Lanarkshire (dealer) 12/21 ex Davey, Bryncethin, Bridgend.

FJ56 OBX (59210) – South Lakes Travel, Askam-in-Furness, Cumbria 6/20 ex Craig, Campbeltown, Argyll & Bute (West Coast Motors) (10708).

LX58 CGF/G/V (15030/1/5), LX09 ABO (15048) – East London, Canning Town, Greater London (15030/1/5/48); allocated to reserve fleet 1/22 pending conversion to open-top.

YJ59 GFK (25242) – The Bus Doctor, Otford, Kent (dealer) 10/21 ex Nu-Venture, Aylesford, Kent (591); being prepared for further use elsewhere rather than with Go-Coachhire, Otford, Kent.

BV66 GRX (44004) – Red & White, Cwmbran, Torfaen (44004); transferred to reserve fleet by 11/21.

BV66 GSY (44010) – Stagecoach Devon, Exeter, Devon (44010) by 2/22 ex Western Buses, Ayr, South Ayrshire (44010); allocated to reserve.

BV66 GUE/F (44019/20) – Cambus, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire (44019/20); allocated to Fenstanton 11/21 whilst on loan, now in formal stock as noted above.

BV66 GUG/K (44021/4) – Red & White, Cwmbran, Torfaen (44021/4) 11/21 ex Bluebird Buses, Aberdeen (44021/4).

Latest reports for disposal vehicles : 11/21 – GJG 739D (7739); 1/22 – EFN 182, YJG 807, 273 AUF, AFN 780B (7780), VJG 187J (1187), MFN 41R (7041), TFN 980T (7980), SKL 681X (7681); 2/22 – FFN 446, KFN 239, MFN 888 (P155), MFN 898, PFN 874 (7874), DJG 619C (8619), GJG 742D (7742), JJP 1P (7001), NFN 84R (1184).

ROUTE CHANGES : A first indication of post-pandemic measures is the de-registration of 15S, 124, 666 (Sundays and bank holidays), 925 and G from **17th April**.

Outsourced work. At Herne Bay on 903/904/905/906, Ensign 120/37/9 remained on 19th January, and 136 had arrived. By 22nd January, 139 had been replaced by 134. This remained so on 26th January. By 29th January, 133 had replaced 120. By 5th (but after 2nd) February, 133 had gone, and 120 was back by 7th February. The current establishment, 120/34/6/7, remained so on 9th February. All had returned home for the half-term break by 12th February.

At Ashford on 962/963, Ensign 138 had replaced 134 by (probably on) 10th January. 135 remained current on 21st January and 138 on 2nd February. We assume that whatever remained returned home for the half-term break (which is a fortnight in the case of Homewood School) by 12th February, but have no further reports.

Bayliss are confirmed as still working 991 on 25th January and Wednesday afternoon 43 on 19th January. They remain last reported on afternoon 922 on 6th January, 80A on 11th January.

Regent were confirmed still duplicating 921 on 1st February.

The only report of Seven Sisters on Bexhill routes since the initial flurry last autumn is of 115 on 95 and SE9 on 96 on 2nd February, when the 95 at 1300 from Bexhill was noted being worked by Stagecoach in addition to their usual late-morning work on 96 (see page 21/369). Thanks to Eric Baldock, visiting from Maidstone, for these notes. Vehicles seem to have generally stopped tracking after 9th February until SE9 on 320 on 7th February and 115 on 95 on 8th February. A late report from Seven Sisters says that one duty has reverted to Stagecoach, but the Company tell us that they have no such knowledge, other than the mid-morning working already mentioned. It would be good to hear from local members on the spot as to exactly what is happening. Further to page 21/336, the 384 remains with Stagecoach.

Park & Ride. It was announced on 4th February that the Sturry Road terminal buildings would be closed at weekends with immediate effect, because of renewed vandalism in the area, but that the P1 would continue. However, the Sunday service did not run on 6th February, but then resumed on 13th February, and remains posted for coming Sundays. As we go to press, proposals have been announced to mothball the site for two years, because of the low recovery rate in post-pandemic usage. The level of patronage was already below that of the other two sites, as reflected in the recent widening of headway.

Temporary diversions. This section is compiled by David Morgan, to whom reports may be sent directly on ekdiversions@btinternet.com.

Sea Street, Whitstable was closed from **17th to 21st January** for water main connection work. All traffic, including buses, towards Tankerton was diverted via Harbour Street. In the opposite direction everything was diverted via the full length of Cromwell Road. 4, 5 and school buses from the station diverted from Railway Avenue to Oxford Street via Cromwell Road. 638 arrived at Harbour Street via High Street and departed via Cromwell Road, keeping its layover to a minimum.

Durlock Road, Staple was closed for re-surfacing from **17th to 21st January**. 44 was unable to serve Staple and was diverted between Ash and Wingham via Shatterling. However, during the **18th** the work was cancelled and 44 returned to its normal route.

Wye Road, Hastingleigh was closed from **17th to 21st January** for water main work. 15S was unable to serve Hastingleigh or Bodsham.

An accident closed the A21 between The Ridge, St Leonard's and the Sedlescombe turning during the afternoon of **17th January**. 349 was diverted via A2100, Battle and Marley Lane.

The Length, St Nicholas-at-Wade was closed on **17th and 18th January** for water pipe repairs. 48A diverted via Manor Road and A28.

Cypress Avenue, Ashford was closed from **18th to 21st January** for carriageway repairs. 519 was diverted via Loudon Way and Springwood Drive.

A burst water main closed The Rising, Eastbourne on **18th January** for three days. Loop was diverted via Priory Road, St Catherine's College and Langney Rise.

Liverpool Road, Walmer, between Walmer and Kingsdown, was closed on **18th January** from 0900 to 1530 for drainage cleansing to be carried out. 82 could only operate to Kingsdown *Jarvist Place*, from where it returned to Walmer *Grams Road* via Kingsdown Road, Granville Road and Liverpool Road.

123 and 124, already on diversion because of South East Water work in Pluckley (see page 22/16), were further disrupted on **19th January** when Little Chart Road, Hothfield was closed because of a burst water main, necessitating the diversion of 123 between Pluckley and Hothfield via Charing. Then just after midday Munday Bois Road was closed for another burst water main. The early afternoon journey from Biddenden had to turn and return to Pluckley Thorne. From there it operated to Ashford via Chamber's Green, Pluckley Road, Old Surrenden Manor Road and A28. This closure effectively cut off Pluckley and Egerton from Smarden and another set of diversions had to be arranged which resulted in 123 serving Biddenden, Smarden and Pluckley Thorne by operating via A28, A262, Biddenden and normal route to Pluckley Thorne, where it turned via Chamber's Green Road, Station Road and Lambden Road. 124 operated normally between Ashford and Egerton Forstal. Further problems beset 123 on **21st January** when an accident closed the A28 between High Halden and London Beach during the afternoon and the 1605 from Ashford had to divert from High Halden to London Beach via Church Hill, Plurenden Road, Bethersden Road, Woodchurch, 2A to Tenterden and A28. This closure also affected the 2 at 1635 from Ashford which diverted from Bethersden to Tenterden via A28, Oakhurst Corner, Bethersden Road, Woodchurch and the 2A route. Munday Bois Road had re-opened in time for the 1605 journey to return to Ashford via Egerton and Charing. The 1745 from Ashford operated from Hothfield to Pluckley via Charing and then normal route to Biddenden. Little Chart Road had re-opened by the **24th**.

An accident closed Western Link, Faversham at the Bysing Wood Road junction for most of **19th January**. 3 was unable to serve Oare and only operated to and from Wildish Road. X3 variously operated direct via the A2 omitting Faversham, or via Faversham town centre or to Wildish Road via Bysing Wood Road in both directions. Those venturing off the A2 had to operate in both directions via Love Lane.

A burst water main closed Shalmsford Street, Chartham, between Bolt's Hill and A28, on **19th January** for nine days. 1 group journeys which normally operate between Chartham *Station* and Shalmsford Bridge via Bolt's Hill and Shalmsford Street remained on the A28. Those which operate via Bolt's Hill, Beech Avenue and Shalmsford Street ran between Shalmsford Bridge and Bolt's Hill via A28, Chartham *Station* and Bolt's Hill.

Work at the QEQM Hospital, Margate closed the grounds from 0800 to 1800 on **19th January**. Loop and 8 remained on Ramsgate Road.

Dover Road, St Margaret's was closed from 0900 to 1600 on **21st January**. 80 diverted via Nelson Park and A258.

A weekend closure of the A249 northbound from Rumstead Lane to Stockbury roundabout was scheduled from 2100 on **21st to 0500 on 24th January** which would have affected X3 and X4 on **22nd January**. Although a few journeys in the morning, including some on Arriva 334, diverted from the M20 junction 7 to M2 junction 5 via M20, A229 Blue Bell Hill and M2, they were all using the A249 by mid-morning. It is not known whether the work was cancelled or whether a complete closure was not needed.

Electrical connection work closed St Stephen's Hill, Canterbury on **22nd and 23rd January**. 5 and Uni2 were diverted between Ye Olde Beverlie and Alcroft Grange via Forty Acres, Whitstable Road, University Road and Giles Lane, although at least one early journey in each direction on the **22nd** operated between Kingsmead Road and Whitstable Road via St Stephen's Road, North Lane (return via Station Road West) and St Dunstan's Street).

The A20 Ashford Road, Maidstone was closed between Willington Street and New Cut Road on **23rd January** for tree surgery. 10X was diverted between Hollingbourne and Maidstone via M20 and A249 Sittingbourne Road.

An accident, in which a car overturned, closed the A258 at Oxney Bottom, between Ringwoud and St Margaret's, for most of the morning on **23rd January**. 80 and 81 diverted between Dover *Duke of York's School* and Deal *Mill Hill* via A2, A256, Eastry by-pass, Northbourne, Great Mongeham and St Richard's Road.

With the re-opening of Sandown Road, Deal (see page 22/16) the replacement of the gas main moved to King Edward Road, Deal, which was closed from **24th January to 18th February**. 80A and 84 diverted from College Road to Golf Road via Harold Road. From **7th February** the work has closed College Road, Deal until **19th April** and 80A and 84 are now operating to Godwyn Road, Sandown via Beach Street and The Marina.

Staple Street, Hernhill was closed from **24th January to 1st February** for gas main service work. 638 was diverted via Kemsdale Road and Kays Lane.

From **24th to 28th January** Hampden Park level crossing, Eastbourne was closed from 2300 to 0600 each night for maintenance by Network Rail. The last Loop journeys in either direction were diverted between Brodrick Road and Mountfield roundabout via Decoy Drive, King's Drive, Cross Levels Way and Lottbridge Drove.

Bluebell Road, Park Farm, Ashford was closed during the morning of **24th January** between Reed Crescent and the bridge over the A2070. B was unable to serve Bridgefield and terminated at and commenced from Wood Lane.

Work by Southern Gas Networks prevented 6, 901/8/11/2/9 from serving Mount View Road and Windmill Road, Herne, Herne Bay from the afternoon of **25th January until 5th February**. They were diverted via Mill Lane. As these works are not scheduled for completion until the beginning of April there could be more times when Mill Lane has to be used.

The replacement of a loose manhole cover closed Headcorn Drive, Hales Place, Canterbury on **25th January** during the afternoon. 21 and Uni2 were diverted to operate the full length of Long Meadow Way and then via Tenterden Drive to Farleigh Road. 21A also traversed all of Long Meadow Way before turning into Tenterden Drive and regaining its normal route at the bus lay-by.

Marine Parade and Belgrave Road, Margate were closed on **27th, 28th and 31st January and 1st February** from 2000 to 0500 each night for re-surfacing. 8/A/X and 34 were diverted between Cecil Square and Westbrook via Churchfields, High Street, St Peters Road, College Road or Queens Avenue, Tivoli Road, Beatrice Road, College Road, (return via Tivoli Road and Grosvenor Gardens) and Hartsdown Road, with buses at Cecil Square using Loop stops on Cecil Street. They turned by operating via Hawley Street, Trinity Square, Fort Crescent, Zion Place, Northdown Road and Hawley Street. With Marine Parade and Marine Terrace open on the **1st February** 8 group and 34 diverted between Cecil Street and Marine Terrace via Hawley Street, Northdown Road, Zion Place, Fort Hill and Marine Parade. These buses turned by operating to the High Street/Victoria Road/Queen's Avenue/Grosvenor Gardens one-way system. Buses were operating normally over the weekend, with no re-surfacing scheduled, until about 1900 on the **29th** when a gas leak closed Marine Terrace outside Dreamland until about 1800 on

1st February. Buses followed the same diversions as those used for the evening closure. However, as Marine Parade and Belgrave Road were open except for the evenings of **31st January and 1st February**, buses were able to use Cecil Square, diverting to/from Tivoli Road or St Peter's Road via Belgrave Road or to/from Cliftonville via Marine Terrace and Fort Hill.

Lucerne Lane, Martin Mill was closed from **28th January** for five days, between 0830 and 1630 each day, to enable repairs to be made to a leaking water pipe. 93 was diverted via Hollands Hill and Station Road.

Alkham Valley Road was closed between Alkham and Kearsney on **28th and 29th January** to clear blockages and pollution. 91 diverted between Alkham Valley Corner and River via A260, Swingfield Minnis, Swanton Lane, Lydden, Temple Ewell and Lower Road or A20, Dover, Buckland Bridge and London Road. Some journeys operating via Dover diverted via Capel and some diverted between Court Wood and Dover via Maxton.

The A249 was closed in a northbound direction from 2100 on **28th to 0500 on 31st January** between Stockbury roundabout and Key Street, affecting X3 and X4 on the **29th** when they were diverted via Danaway and Chestnut Street. Severe congestion caused long delays to these services. The same section of road will be closed again from 2100 on **25th to 0500 on 28th February** and X3 and X4 will use the same diversion again.

Further tree surgery closed the A20 Ashford Road, Maidstone between New Cut Road and Square Hill Road during the morning of **30th January**. 10X was diverted via New Cut Road, Bearsted Road and Sittingbourne Road.

Whitstable Road, Canterbury was closed between Forty Acres Road and Westgate Court Avenue for repairs to a water main from **31st January** for five nights from 1900 to 0600 each night. Triangle and Uni2 were diverted between St Dunstan's *Church/Rheims Way* and University Road via London Road, Harbledown by-pass, Rough Common and St Thomas' Hill.

Lower Chantry Lane, Canterbury was closed for re-surfacing on **31st January** for three nights from 2000 to 0500. 25A and 43 were diverted between Longport and St George's roundabout via Monastery Street, Lady Wooton's Green, Broad Street and Lower Bridge Street.

A burst water main closed the A28 at St Michael's, Tenterden on **31st January**. 2 diverted between Bethersden and Tenterden via A28, Oakhurst Corner, Bethersden Road, Woodchurch and the 2A route.

On **1st to 4th and 7th February** Margate Road, Ramsgate was closed at the Pyson Road/Allenby Road junction for re-surfacing from 1900 to 0500 each night. Loop journeys diverted between the Hare & Hounds and Stirling Way via Newington Road. Journeys via the viaduct then operated via Newington Road and Margate Road via Whitehall Road.

A fatal accident closed the A258 between the two roads to St Margaret's-at-Cliffe on **2nd February**. Buses were diverted via Station Road, Nelson Park, Dover Road and West Cliffe.

On **3rd and 4th February** Chick Hill, Pett was closed for work by BT Openreach. Then gas main work closed it again from **14th to 16th February**. 347 was only able to operate to and from Elm Lane during both closures.

New Dover Road, Canterbury was closed either side of St Augustine's Road for re-surfacing from 2000 to 0500 on the nights of **3rd, 4th, 7th and 8th February**. 15 and 16 were diverted via Old Dover Road and St Lawrence Road.

Repairs to a gas leak closed Mead Road, Ashford, near the Albion Pub, on **5th February** for six days. G was diverted from Canterbury Road to Crowbridge Road via Crowbridge Link.

Another gas leak closed Oxenden Road, Folkestone from **5th to 8th February**. 10 and 70 were diverted via Enbrook Road and Military Road.

Hunter Road, Ashford was closed on **5th and 6th February** to enable South East Water to carry out utility and maintenance work. C diverted between Hythe Road and Hunter Avenue via Church Road and Osborne Road, with the odd journey taking a short-cut by using Albemarle Road.

A fatal accident closed Marsh Road, A259, between Pevensey and Little Common from mid-morning until late afternoon on **5th February**. 99 diverted via Wartling Road, Wartling, A271, A269 and A259. Some journeys avoided Wartling Road and operated via Hailsham, A22 and A27.

The South East Water work in Pluckley had moved further along Forge Hill from **7th February**, opening up the Forge Hill/The Street junction. This has enabled 123 journeys which do not serve Egerton and 124 to divert via Lambden Road, Station Road and The Street. It is expected that this diversion will be in force until **15th April**.

Romney Marsh Road, Ashford was closed from **7th to 10th February** from 2100 to 0500 each night for re-surfacing between Asda roundabout and Bad Munstereifel Road. B was diverted via Norman Road, Beaver Road, Kingsnorth Road and Ashford Road.

The A258 was closed near the Swingate Inn, Dover from **7th to 9th February** from 1930 to 0530 each night for the installation of variable message signs (VMS). Evening journeys running dead from Deal to Dover had to operate via Eastry and A256.

Easole Street, Nonington was closed on **7th and 8th February** to enable a new electrical connection to be made. On the **7th** 96 operated between Chillenden and Nonington via Station Road, Ackholt Road, Pinners Hill and Beauchamps Lane. On the **8th** only the morning journey was affected, diverting via Station Road, Ackholt Road, Aylesham and Snowdown and turning in the centre of Nonington. 89 and 95 diverted between Snowdown and Elvington via Woolage Village, Womanswold, Barham Crossroads, A2, Coxhill and Shepherdswell.

Dover Road, St Margaret's-at-Cliffe was closed on **7th February** for carriageway patching work. Buses operated into and out of St Margaret's via Station Road.

Church Hill, Eythorne was closed from 0930 to 1530 on **7th February** for telecoms cabling work to be undertaken and then again on **16th and part of 17th February** for electrical work. On both occasions 89, 92/A were unable to serve Elvington and operated to and from Eythorne *EKLR Station*, turning by operating via Barville Road to Barville roundabout on the A256.

Monkton Road, Minster is closed from **8th February to 11th March** for sewer connection work. On the **8th** 9, 11 and school buses operated between Minster *Church* and Monkton roundabout via High Street, Tothill Street and A299. From the **9th** buses starting serving Monkton by operating between Monkton roundabout and Parsonage Fields, where they are turning via Willets Hill.

Teynham Road, Whitstable was closed, off-peak, on **9th February** for footway maintenance. 4 and 5 operated between Whitstable *Station* and Church Street *The Monument* either via Cromwell Road, Oxford Street, Belmont Road and Old Bridge Road or Cromwell Road, Tower Parade, Tankerton Road, Tankerton Circus, St Anne's Road, Northwood Road and Castle Road.

At about midday on **9th February** the road between Sellindge and Brabourne Lees was closed for 24 hours. 10/A and 18A were diverted via A20, Church Road and Woolpack Hill, turning at Child's Garage.

Belgrave Road, Dover was closed at its junction with Folkestone Road on **10th February** days to enable a gas leak to be repaired. 68 remained on Folkestone Road. Due to last nine days, the closure was still in place on **21st February**.

10706 was involved in an accident on **11th February**, blocking the Folkestone-bound carriageway of Sandgate Road, Folkestone from 1250 for about an hour. 16 and 102 were diverted via Earls Avenue, Bouverie Road West and Castle Hill Avenue.

Hailsham Town Centre was cordoned off for most of the afternoon on **11th February** after unknown substances were handed in at the police station following a house clearance. Buses were diverted via Summerheath Road and Western Road.

The A28 at Rolvenden was closed from **12th to 20th February** for gas main replacement work. 2 was diverted between Tenterden and Rolvenden via Cranbrook Road, Benenden Road, Benenden Hospital, Goddard's Green Road, New Pond Road and A2086. The journeys between Ashford and Rolvenden only operated to/from Tenterden.

The A267 south of Horam is closed for re-surfacing from **14th February** for three weeks from 1900 on weekday evenings. 51 is diverting between Horam and Hailsham *Anglesey Avenue* via Horebeech Lane, Marle Green, Grove Hill, Swingate Cross, Park Road, A271 and London Road.

Ruckinge Road, Hamstreet is closed from **14th to 27th February** for drainage repair work. 11A is diverting between Hamstreet and Newchurch via A2070, Snave and Newchurch Lane.

Dover Road, Guston is closed from **14th to 25th February** for site clearance work. 93 is unable to serve Burgoyne Heights and is diverting between Dover Castle and Guston via A258 and The Lane.

The Street, Acol was closed on **14th February** for seven days for carriageway repairs. 48 diverted between Manston Business Park and Acol via B2190, B2050 Manston Road and Margate Hill.

Electrical connection work closed Warehorne Road, Hamstreet near the A2070 overbridge from **14th to 20th February**. 11B diverted between Hamstreet and Appledore Heath via A2070, Brenzett, B2080 and Appledore turning by operating via School Road and Tenterden Road. The 2A journey which commences from Warehorne Crossroads was amended to commence from Kenardington *The Wish*.

The A20 Ashford Road, Maidstone was closed to westbound traffic between Huntsman Lane and Square Hill Road from **14th to 18th February** for drainage work. 10X was diverted via New Cut Road, Bearsted Road and Sittingbourne Road in both directions.

The road through Plucks Gutter, Stourmouth was scheduled to be closed from **14th to 18th February** for electrical connection work. However this closure was cancelled on the **14th** and the road remained open. 11 operated the diversion detailed below until about midday on the **16th**. Then on the **19th** the road was closed at the railway bridge at Gore Street for ground investigation work. 11 operated between Minster and Wingham via Tothill Street, A299, A256 and A257, with some journeys also serving Monkton *Parsonage Fields*.

Union Street and Dale Hill, Ticehurst were closed from **14th to 18th February** for road repairs to eastbound traffic (towards Flimwell). 254 was diverted from Ticehurst to Flimwell via B2099 and A21.

Station Road, Hothfield was closed from **14th to 18th February** for tree surgery. 10X did not serve Hothfield and 123 operated via Cades Road.

Curtis Way, Faversham was closed from **14th to 17th February** to enable repair work to be undertaken by South East Water. 3, X3 and 666 were diverted between South Road and Dark Hill via Lower Road and Stonebridge Way.

Repair work by South East Water closed Shalloak Road, Broad Oak near the level crossing from **15th to 18th February**. 7 was diverted via A28 between Sturry Road *Vauxhall Road* and Sturry *Station*. This closure was cancelled during the **15th** and 7 returned to its normal route from the last journeys in either direction that day.

The Seaside roundabout, Eastbourne was closed to all traffic from 1900 on **15th February**. Buses were diverted via Channel View Road, Grand Parade and Princes Road.

Albion Street, Broadstairs was closed on **16th February** to repair a live electrical cable. This preceded a scheduled closure for a new electrical connection from **21st February** for five days. During these closures 37 is using the normal diversion from Broadstairs *Station* via Carlton Avenue, Stanley Road, Callis Court Road, Lanthorne Road, Stone Road, Knights Avenue, Kings Avenue, Lindenthorpe Road and Carlton Avenue back to the station.

BT Openreach work to re-connect a customer closed Longage Hill, Lympne on **16th February**. 18 was diverted between Sandling *Station* and Rhodes Minnis *Lord Whisky Animal Sanctuary* via A20, M20 junction 11, Stone Street and Six Mile Garage. The closure was due to last three days, but was still in place on **21st February**.

Stone Street, Lympne was closed on **16th February** for drainage work. 10/A operated between Port Lympne Animal Park *Car Park* and Newingreen via Otterpool Lane and A20.

The A254 Ramsgate Road, Margate was closed at the railway bridge for bridge maintenance and repair work on **16th February** from 2200 until 0600 the following morning. Loop was diverted via St Peter's Road and College Road.

George Hill Road, Broadstairs was closed on **17th February** for three days for work by BT Openreach. 8A operated via the Loop route between Northdown Park and St Peter's *Railway Bridge*. 33 operated between Broadstairs *Grange Road* and Kingsgate *Botany Road* via Beacon Road, Westover Road, Green Lane and George Hill Road.

Repairs to a water pipe closed Nackington Road, Canterbury on **17th February**. 18 was diverted between Street End *The Granville* and Old Dover Road, Canterbury via Bridge Road, Station Road and A2050.

The A28 Canterbury Road, Westgate was closed on **17th February** from 2230 until 0500 the following morning for work by Southern Water. 8X was diverted via the 8 route between Westgate *Library* and Westbrook *Royal Sea Bathing Hospital*.

Maintenance work to the level crossing by Network Rail closed St Stephen's Road, Canterbury from 0600 to 2200 on **19th and 20th February**. 5 and Uni2 were diverted between Kingsmead Road and Ye Olde Beverlie via St Stephen's Road, North Lane, St Dunstan's Street (return via Station Road West) and Forty Acres Road.

Bifron's Hill, Patricbourne is closed for re-surfacing from **21st to 25th February**. 89B is operating between Adisham *Pond Hill* and Renville Cottages via Station Road, B2046, Barham Crossroads and A2.

High Cross, Rotherfield will be closed on **25th February**. 252 will not be able to serve Rotherfield and will operate as a 251.

ROUTE WORKING : A – We're sorry that the intended penultimate line of the entry on page 22/18 somehow became deleted at final formatting. The closing sentence should have read "A further Solo is scheduled as a crew ferry, and on Homewood schooldays (when they apply) a further 3 DD are required on MTThF and 4 on W including 962, 963 and minority route 2-1436W, although two of these are suppressed whilst 962 and 963 remain outsourced".

AROUND THE AREAS : Ashford area. 15772 was borrowed at Canterbury Bus Station for 1A on 10th January after 15475 failed. 18528 worked the 666 at 1745 from William Harvey Hospital to Faversham on 8th February, diverting via Love Lane to avoid the low bridge in Forbes Road.

Canterbury area. 28609 remained regular on 4.6 (the thirteenth DM working) until becoming unfit on 17th January after an unusual appearance on afternoon 901. 15780 worked the afternoon X3 which would have run via Luddenham School on 27th January, though it is thought that it kept to the normal route, running as it was more than 30min late following an SLF failure. 10717 was unusual on a DD working of 7 on 28th January in that it worked a Reculver journey, believed to be the first appearance of an MMC vehicle there. 15779 completed the 0735 journey of 638 from Faversham on 8th February after 34434 became unfit. 10717 was an unusual appearance of an Alexander Dennis MMC on 43 on the morning of 8th February until failing at Ash on the 0740 from Canterbury. 15915 replaced it about an hour later. 26232 was relatively unusual on Uni2 on 11th February. 26234 was on 903 on the morning of 2nd February, alongside Ensign 134. The reason for this is not known.

The route display boards at Canterbury Bus Station have recently been renewed, including updated information. Those on bay A are in green from the new livery, bay B blue, bay C red and bay D sand/gold. ** B and D new livery colours?

A bee-friendly bus shelter has been unveiled in Wingham to support pollinators.

Dover area. 10066 and 27920 were unusual on P3 on 19th January.

Eastbourne area. 19653 (Loop branding) was unusual on 99 on 8th February.

Folkestone area. The bus gate at the entrance to the Bus Station remains temperamental. We shall not record further such occasions unless they prove long-term.

15557 was borrowed at Canterbury Bus Station for 16 on 20th February after 15502 failed.

Thanet area. When available, the second Solo has been increasingly common on 34 (SLF) and associated workings since mid-January. 15780 was borrowed at Canterbury Bus Station for 11 on 20th January after 18175 failed. 26236 was fairly unusual on 45 (SLF) on 1st February, and the last 37 was worked by 15269, terminating at Westwood because of excessively-late running. MMC Enviro200s have become common on BK1 (DD) since the start of the month. 34444 was an unusual Sunday use of an SLF on Loop on 13th February, including the evening, followed by 34441/83 and 34649 on 20th February. After a period of a fairly full run-out, driver shortages have arisen again, with up to ten workings reported missing on some days (especially at school times), chiefly on Loop but also on 8 group, 32 and 34.

SOUTH COAST BUSES (Hastings area)

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSALS : No reports.

Latest reports for disposal vehicles : 12/21 – AAP 648T (7348).

HASTINGS & DISTRICT (1983-1992)

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSALS : No reports.

Latest reports for disposal vehicles : 2/22 – VKE 566S (366).

BORO'LINE MAIDSTONE

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSALS : F103 TML (923) – Used Coach Sales, Warrington, Cheshire (dealer); in use as a store-shed by 1/22.
Latest reports for disposal vehicles : None.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUBSEQUENT DISPOSALS : OKM 146G (46) – Still extant with an unidentified owner in a field near Cullybackey, Antrim late in 2021, now bedecked with an advertisement for Woodhill Training services (see page 70 of *Buses* for February).
Latest reports for disposal vehicles : None.

OTHER OPERATORS

(Those with licensed address and at least one operating centre within the Club area)

Vehicle notes are compiled by Jonathan Fletcher, to whom reports may be sent directly on other.operators@mdekbusclub.org.uk or by post to 104a High Street, UCKFIELD, East Sussex, TN22 1PX. Traffic reports should be sent to the Editor please.

Autocar, Five Oak Green : Planned road works in Dunks Green mean that the 222 is being diverted on relevant days via School Lane, not serving Plaxtol *Spoute* or Dunks Green. This started on 22nd January all day, then from 0930 to 1530 on 24th January. The Monday closure was cancelled on 31st January, but the closure of 29th January over-ran into the Tuesday. The further closure planned from 1st to 12th February did not start until 9th February. During week commencing 14th February, School Lane was closed, so 222 could run normally. In the next phase, scheduled from 21st February to 8th March, Dunks Green is closed again and 222 will revert to running via School Lane. Transit DN57 WFL has been assigned to the KCC schoolday feeder bus awarded from 1st February during these works and has been provided throughout, including days when the main closures did not occur.

Bayliss, Eythorne : There is a contract working between the Folkestone area and Bakkavor Salads at Tilmanstone. Further details are not known.

Bovington, Margate (P.D. Mini Coaches / Bovy Tours) : Vehicle re-registered and out : P10 BOV withdrawn by 6/21 and re-registered to W447 WFG in 12/21.

Brookline, Ryarsh : BEZ 9083 of Carosa, Hoo has been on loan, and was noted in use on 4A on 19th January and in the depot on 5th February.

Brown, Lordswood (Canada Cabs) : Authorisation has been granted, with conditions.

Carosa, Hoo (Farleigh Coaches) : MEZ 3972 received a new fleetname FARLEIGH BUSES.co.uk by 10/21 (it had previously been running without any fleetnames).

Chalkwell, Sittingbourne : Vehicles in :

E15 CWL Vo B11R (171217) Pn Pr 3 (EP20/01) C53DLT 3/15
red with white and black flash; ex Pulham, Bourton on the Water, Gloucestershire circa 2/21 as VU15 PVE and re-registered to E15 CWL in 12/21; previously ex PU15 HAM 10/20. This did not enter service immediately, but underwent PSVAR modifications before being licensed in December or January.

BL15 BMU Fd Tt (TTGHFL68461) Fd 16 8/15
ex Kent College, Canterbury, Kent (npsv) 12/21.

LJ09 CAV AD Tdt 2 (SFD16MBRA8GXB5056) AD Eo 400 (8434/5) H41/26D 4/09
LJ09 CCU AD Tdt 2 (SFD16MBRA9GXB5079) AD Eo 400 (8434/20) H41/26D 4/09
both red with white fleetnames; ex Abellio London, Camberwell, Greater London (9432, 9447) 1/22. These two are confirmed in service in dual door format.

Correcting page 22/20, SN11 BPU was re-registered to Y10 CWL and SN11 BPX to L24 CWL in 12/21, not the other way round as stated in some other sources. All of Y10 CWL, K20 CWL and L24 CWL (originally SN11 BPU/V/X) have H43/31F seating.

GB15 PUL was re-registered to C13 CWL in 12/21.

WG63 FDC has a body conversion by GM Coachwork.

Vehicle out : GX04 AWR sold 10/21.

Wye Free School services WS1, WS2 and WS3 were all taken up from 19th January (see notes for R&J, Smeeth on page 23/23) following tendering by KCC. Routes and timetables are unchanged.

Clarke's, Headcorn : Ownership passed to Streamline in March 2020. The separate authorisation remains.

Compaid, Paddock Wood : The operating centres at Farthing Corner and New Ash Green have been withdrawn, the total at Paddock Wood reduced to 4N vehicles, and various conditions have been attached to the authorisation.

Crosskeys, Folkestone : PO58 NPY is in orange fleet livery.

Dosanjh, Strood (A.S.D. Coaches) : BJ11 EAF has H43/31F seating.

Gillies, Aylesham is reported to be in the process of closing down. Most of the coaches have been advertised for sale and at least two (BV58 MKE and FM15 KRN) have been sold. On 11th February only two minibuses were parked in the depot yard (although there might have been something inside the building). A for sale sign had been attached to the side fence by a local estate agent, whose website lists the depot as "sold subject to contract".

Gorwyn, Cross in Hand : Vehicle in :

BA19 OWU MB Turismo (41054523001477) MB C53FT 6/19
white; ex EvoBus, Coventry, West Midlands (dealer hire fleet) 2/22.

BG65 VWX is now white with JG European fleetnames.

Vehicle out : BL16 GBF sold by 10/21 (not before 7/21).

Ham, Flimwell : From 12th to 20th February a road closure in Rolvenden for gas main replacement work caused 297 to be diverted between Benenden *Village Hall* and Tenterden *Castweazle* by returning to the crossroads, then New Pond Road, Goddards Green Road, Tenterden Road and Cranbrook Road. Rolvenden could not be served.

Loyalty Connections, Margate : Vehicle in :
L222 LOY MB Turismo (?) MB ? 6/20
white; ex unknown operator 2/22; ex unknown previous registration 2/22.

Mewse, Ashford : The licensed address changed to Stepfield House, **Stone**-in-Oxney, Tenterden, TN30 7JT in January, and authorisation was revised to National status; it has since been reduced to 1 vehicle. So far, we have no reports of vehicles held by this operator. Ownership passed to Richard Clarke in November.

NK Holidays, Sittingbourne: NK Holidays Ltd., 3 Central Avenue, Sittingbourne, ME10 4BX have applied for 2 vehicles under PK2053339 with operating centre at South Dean Farm, South Green, Sittingbourne, ME9 7RX.

Nova Bussing, Rye : RE71 AGU and RE71 AJX are C16F but can be downseated to C10F with tables.

Nu-Venture, Aylesford : A temporary dealer loan from the beginning of February is 900 (LX09 AZJ), an Alexander Dennis Dart 4 / Optare Esteem B29D new in 6/09, ex London General, Colliers Wood, Greater London (SOE24). After its first day in service on 172 it was expected to be used mainly on 285 at Tunbridge Wells.

The current reduced timetable on 285 was registered from 6th October. The service has now been de-registered from 2nd April. 79A and 79C will have a reduced level of service from 4th April.

Starline continue to cover the 66, at least until Easter, using a non-PSVAR coach. A reduced timetable remains in place on 77 because of continued staff shortages.

On 8th February, 27 was temporarily diverted away from Marden *Station* and *Library* because of a local road closure. From 14th to 18th February, the B2163 was closed at Leeds Road, Langley and 13 was diverted via the full length of Horseshoe Lane. For the same dates, local road works again closed the A25 in the Platt area, and 70 was diverted non-stop via an alternative route between Borough Green *Station* and Wrotham Heath, not serving Borough Green *High Street*. On 15th February, 23 and 27 were diverted on the outskirts of Goudhurst left onto the B2084, then right onto the A262 at the village centre, and vice-versa, during local Highways works. On 16th February, 23 and 27 were curtailed at Marden for two separate periods during the day, one after an accident and another after a telegraph pole became displaced on the B2079. From 28th February, local road works will close Dean Street until the end of March. 25 and 26 will follow an alternative route between Tovil and Yalding, not serving Hunton, Hunton Hill, Gallants Lane or Dean Street.

Paxton, Ramsgate (United Cars) : Vehicle in :
DG63 MYF MB 513CDI (9061532N562454) Me (?) B16FL 11/13
white; ex London Hire, Erith, Greater London 2/22.

Additional non-psv minibuses are EY11 OFN (Renault Master / ? -4-L) and AU16 DYM (Renault Master).

R&J Coaches, Smeth : The only school services now registered are RJ1 and RJ2, serving The Lenham School. However, the Wye Free School website mentions that they also retain P6, which appears to be a late sweeper operation on Thursday afternoons, though no details are known.

Rambler, St Leonard's : Further to page 22/23, it is confirmed that the Tesco Hollington free bus had been withdrawn by September.

Regent, Whitstable : Vehicles in :
BX14 NFL VW Crf (E6037003) Sd (?) B14FL 8/14
grey; ex Howard, Cole & Woolard, Enfield, Greater London 2/22.
HV70 LUJ Fd Tt (TTRMLA26156) Fd 16 9/20
HV70 LWD Fd Tt (TTRMLA22504) Fd 16 9/20
both ex University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust, Worthing, West Sussex (npsv) 2/22.

Repairs to a water pipe closed Nackington Road, Canterbury on 17th February. 620 was diverted between Street End *The Granville* and Old Dover Road, Canterbury via Bridge Road, Station Road and A2050.

Eastling Road is closed between Painters Forstal and Eastling from 14th February until 8th April. 660 is diverted via Stalisfield Road.

Richards, Crowborough : This application has been withdrawn.

Roffey, Watlington (Starline) : After an extended period out of use, ROF 462 returned to service at the beginning of February.

Vehicle out : YJ07 PBZ withdrawn (accident victim) 1/22.

The absence of YJ07 PBZ following its accident has been covered by hires from Brown, Crawley, West Sussex (Crawley Luxury), including Volvo coaches DJI 654 on 1st February and WC02 CLC on 2nd February.

Smith, Molash : It has only just been discovered that non-psv GJ61 XXV (Volkswagen Transporter / Volkswagen 8-seat) moved here from Butlers, Littlestone when they ceased in 9/17.

Streamline, Headcorn : Authorisation was revised to National status in August, the licensed address changed to 68 King Street, **Maidstone**, ME14 1BL in October, and authorisation was reduced to 20N vehicles at the Traffic Commissioner's inquiry in January. A new operating centre is now listed at 7a Munday Works, 58-66 Morley Road, Tonbridge, TN9 1RP; both this and the existing Headcorn operating centre are now listed for the total of 20N vehicles.

The Maidstone Kent Karrier service was de-registered from 20th December. It is not known whether any other operator has taken up this work.

T&T Cars, Vigo : T&T Cars Ltd., 28 Hornbeams, Vigo, Gravesend, DA13 0TA have applied for 2R vehicles under PK2053389 with operating centre at Whittings Farm, High Street, Halling, ME2 1DA.

Thanet Community, Birchington : Authorisation was surrendered on 15th February.

Troke, Ramsgate : Authorisation has been revoked. Operations ceased some time ago.

OPERATORS OUTSIDE FORMAL COVERAGE

(Including operators of stretched limousines, and significant npsv developments)

Brighton & Hove, Hove : A timetable change registered on 29 group from 10th January only seems to be for a very minor change at the Brighton end.

Compass Bus, Worthing : Road works on Queens Road, Chapel Green End on 25th February will entail diversion of 228/229 via Queens Road (south), Whitehill Road, Croft Road and Church Road.

Go-Coachhire, Otford : 8347 arrived from Abellio at Swanley on 26th January. 8345 arrived from Abellio on 3rd February. 8343 remains in store with Abellio at Beddington for the time being.

5501 returned from repaint on 20th January, entering service on 4th February. 8346 went to repaint on 21st January, returning on 4th February and entering service on 10th February. 8347 went to repaint on 4th February, returning on 14th February. 8344 went to repaint on 14th February, having moved in store to Otford on 21st January.

8301/4 were placed on SORN on 1st February, having been last used on 31st January (afternoon S8) and 4th January (afternoon S12) respectively, and moved in store to Swanley during the first week of February. 8301 then returned to Otford on 12th February and has been loaned to Hadlow Rural Community School from 17th February. 8304 is due to return to Otford for pre-sale preparation. 8302 and 8802 are/remain stored at Swanley.

YJ59 GFK is being prepared for further use, though not within this fleet, so should be regarded as part of the dealer stock of The Bus Doctor.

Three of the four extra hour Amazon duplicates at times of shift-changes (two in each of the morning and afternoon) finished on 10th January. The 1845 on LCY3 to Dartford continued until 2nd February. It appears that AZ will be withdrawn from 3rd April because of poor patronage, with alternative facilities being provided by Arriva.

Brookline were providing a duplicate to TW8 until 11th February.

Trainfor Group, Hersden : Further to page 22/12, SJ56 GBY and SJ56 GCF arrived on 21st January from Yellow Bus, Bournemouth, Dorset (9001/2). These are Alexander Dennis Dart 4/Alexander Dennis Enviro 300 vehicles. However, a late report suggests that they have been offered for re-sale, because of their length. The earlier SLFs remain in evidence.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

AWARDS : Routine contract renewals are currently under tender for introduction from 3rd April. No award details were available when this issue closed.

Further to page 21/27, the schoolday feeder bus between Dunks Green and Plaxtol from 1st February to 12th March was awarded to Autocar. Please see that entry for further information. New Mon-Fri service 60 between Maidstone *King Street* and Maidstone Hospital via Hermitage Park from 4th April has been awarded to Dosanjh, Strood.

Further to the contract awarded to Dhanda, Gravesend (Merlin Coaches) for schoolday service 111 from the start of the last autumn term (page 21/292 refers), Dhanda

did not register the service until 16th December, and 1st Bus Stop, Gravesend, the previous operator, did not de-register it until 4th January. It appears that Dhanda operated the service throughout the autumn term, technically on hire to 1st Bus Stop, but we have no local reports as to what actually happened.

The Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee held a meeting on 18th February to consider actions which would achieve, or otherwise offset, a £2m reduction in the local bus services support budget in the coming financial year. Many services which have featured in previous such reviews but have hitherto escaped withdrawal appear again, but there are others, more substantial, which could now be at risk. Decisions seem likely to be based heavily on the cost of subsidy per passenger journey, with different thresholds for various types of supported operation (e.g. school services, isolated communities, evenings, weekends). It is probably no surprise that Kent Karrier services and the "Big Conversation" routes introduced following that exercise in 2019 feature high on this list. Some are costing more than £40 per passenger journey. The meeting endorsed proposals to hold public consultations in the coming weeks on the service reductions and other changes that could become necessary, although a timescale for these is not yet determined. It is proposed to hold public consultations on proposals which emerge from the meeting in the coming weeks, with final implementations from the end of July. Smaller operators seem particularly likely to lose work if the reductions go ahead as planned. The press has started to get hold of this story, not always grasping the facts correctly.

Supported operations on the list are 4 (Edenbridge to Ide Hill), 5 (Maidstone to Sandhurst, Mon-Sat evenings), 6/645 (school journeys), 6 (Tunbridge Wells to Pembury, Sundays), 8/9/343/344/345, 13/59 (Saturdays), 17 (Mon-Sat evenings), 24, 58, 59 (Mon-Fri), 60/61/61A (Mon-Sat evenings), 61/61A/90 (Sundays), 70/502, 88, 111 (Ashford to Folkestone), 123, 208/209, 222 (schoolday journeys), 255, 266, 277 (Mon-Fri early journey), 292/299, 293, 296, 332, 360 (Sundays), 433/489 (Sundays), 474/475, 541/542/544, 634, 662/664/666 (schoolday journeys), 954 (Birchington to Sandwich), Detling Shopper, E1, HC3, HS7/HS8, Sandwich Connect, Tenterden Hopper, TW9, X1/X2 and Kent Karriers at Ashford, Maidstone, North West Kent, South East Kent, Sevenoaks, Swale, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells. It is important to note that commercial operations on some of these are not affected, at least at the moment.

None of this takes account of action which may need to be taken to provide new support for hitherto-commercial operations which are now starting to be de-registered by some operators.

The meeting was also due to consider an increase in the cost of the standard Kent Travel Saver card from £370 to £450 per year, taking effect from the opening of the 2022/3 application window in early June. The existing low income pass would however remain at £120, and the present sibling and care pass offers would also be unchanged.

GENERAL : The local press reports plans for a contraflow bus lane, forming part of a £5m Fastrack programme across Dartford, Gravesham and Ebbsfleet to improve the area's transport network. The new bus lane will link the Northfleet Embankment East development and Gravesend town centre.

Construction work on the Dover Fastrack project is to start this month following the award of a contract which is expected to last around 18 months. It will include a new bridge across the A2 at Whitfield, and a new link road from the Whitfield B&Q roundabout to Dover Road at Guston, the bridge and the Guston junction being for buses, cycles and pedestrians only.

RAIL REPLACEMENT

The following are scheduled for the coming period :

26th February : Ebbsfleet International to Ashford International (after 2300).

27th February : Ebbsfleet International to Ashford International.

27th February : Ashford International to Canterbury West.

27th February : Paddock Wood to Strood (possibly split at Maidstone West).

6th March : Ashford International to Margate, split as Ashford International to Canterbury West (fast and stopping), Canterbury West to Ramsgate (all stations), Canterbury West to Margate (limited stops).

13th March : Tonbridge to Paddock Wood.

13th March : Ramsgate area, split as Margate to Ramsgate, Margate to Minster, Ramsgate to Minster.

19th March : Folkestone West to Deal.

19th March : Dover Priory to Canterbury East.

19th March : Swanley to Rochester, split as Swanley to Strood (all stations except Sole Street), Meopham to Sole Street (minibus shuttle).

20th March : Folkestone West to Deal.

20th March : Dover Priory to Canterbury East.

20th March : Bromley South to Strood/Borough Green & Wrotham, split as Bromley South to Strood (calling at all stations except Sole Street), Meopham to Sole Street (minibus shuttle), Bromley South to Borough Green & Wrotham (calling at all stations).

26th March : Gravesend area, split as Ebbsfleet International to Strood, Northfleet (buses more than likely starting from Greenhithe) to Strood.

27th March : Tonbridge Wells to Battle.

27th March : Dover Priory to Ramsgate.

27th March : Gravesend/Strood area, split as Ebbsfleet International to Strood, Dartford to Gillingham, Gravesend to Maidstone West.

Reports received on scheduled work during the past month :

15th January : Three Bridges area* - Ham (MC07 HAM, DW65 HAM, MC65 HAM, BV18AYH, DW18 HAM).

16th January : Faversham area, split as Sittingbourne to Herne Bay calling at all stations except Teynham, Sittingbourne to Dover Priory calling at Faversham and Canterbury East only, Canterbury East to Dover Priory calling at all stations, Sittingbourne to Selling (minibus shuttle calling at all stations) - Bayliss (RM56 BAY *at Sittingbourne*, YR61 RVC *at Canterbury East*); Chalkwell (MX08 DHV *Sittingbourne to Selling*); London General (E13, E15, E25, E229 *all at Sittingbourne*); Regent (MX62 AXN *at Canterbury East*); Taylors (YG18 CWD *at Canterbury East*); Travelmasters (AY58 CYJ, SN58 ENU *both at Sittingbourne*, BX12 CVL and an unidentified Caetano coach); YMS (P9 YMS *sectors not reported except as shown*).

16th January : Tonbridge to Headcorn, split as Tonbridge to Headcorn, Headcorn to Ashford International, Tonbridge to Maidstone West – Go-Coachhire (unidentified *Tonbridge to Maidstone West*); YMS (V3 YMS *Headcorn to Ashford International*).

22nd January : Tonbridge to Paddock Wood – London General (E133, E238, E244, E247, WHV10, WHV62).

22nd January : Tonbridge to Wadhurst – Access Travel (YJ12 PKV, YJ12 PKZ); Ham (DW02 HAM, MC56 HAM, MC16 HAM, BV18 AYH, DW21 HAM); London General (51, E66, E99, E256, EH114, EH124, EH194).

22nd January : Tonbridge to Edenbridge* - Ensign (707); Travelmasters (VE58 XKX, WX09 TCK).

London General E6 and E132 were also at Tonbridge, but it is unclear which operation they were supporting. Go-Coachhire 5010 and Ham DW71 HAM were on stand-by at Tonbridge.

23rd January : Sevenoaks to Paddock Wood (calling at Tonbridge only), Sevenoaks to Wadhurst, Tonbridge to Paddock Wood – Access Travel (YJ12 PKV, YJ12 PKZ *both Tonbridge to Paddock Wood*); Go-Coachhire (5601 *Tonbridge to Paddock Wood*); Ham (DW65 HAM, MC65 HAM, MC19 HAM *all Sevenoaks to Paddock Wood*, R17 HAM, DW02 HAM, DW60 HAM, MC16 HAM *at Sevenoaks*, MC56 HAM *spare at Paddock Wood*, MC16 HAM, WD17 HAM, DW21 HAM *unspecified*); London General (EH231 *Sevenoaks to Paddock Wood*, 160, 183, MDL1, SE55, SE84, SE104, SE107, SE115, SE217, SEN10 *Sevenoaks to Wadhurst*, E96, SE107, VWL47 *at Sevenoaks*, SE110 *unspecified*).

23rd January : posted as Oxted to East Grinstead, Oxted to Crowborough, Purley to East Grinstead, Edenbridge to Tonbridge* - Brighton & Hove (500 *at Oxted*, 550, 855, 921 *at East Grinstead*, 842 *Oxted to Purley*); Crawley Luxury (YYL 370 *Crowborough to Oxted*, BG15 UMK *at Oxted*); Edwards (JE52 LJE, WJ66 CUY *Edenbridge to Crowborough for connections to Oxted and Purley*, WJ19 HRK *Crowborough to Uckfield*); Go-Coachhire (3802, 3901, 5010 *Edenbridge to Tonbridge*); London General (52 *at Oxted*, 902 *Crowborough to Uckfield*, MB2 *Crowborough to Edenbridge*, WVN30 *Oxted to Purley*); Metrobus (6783 *Crowborough to Oxted*); Seaford and District (V222 SEA *Oxted to Crowborough*); Southdown PSV (GX57 BXG, YX59 BZC *at East Grinstead*, MX09 HHO *at Oxted*).

London General 171 and 182 were spare at Tonbridge, but it is unclear which operation they were supporting. London General EN3 and Metrobus 6775, 6776 were on stand-by at Crowborough.

29th January : Sittingbourne to Sheerness – London General (EN13, EN14, VWL47); Travelmasters (FJ08 FYK).

30th January : Gillingham to Faversham – 1st Bus Stop (LX53 JZJ, LX53 JZN, LJ04 YWZ, LX04 FYH, YX58 FPE); Chalkwell (WA11 BWE); Crosskeys (X72 UAO, PO58 NPY); London General (E13, E15, E25, E131, E235, EN14, MDL1, VWL47); Travelmasters (FJ08 FYK, MX08 ZFA, WY09 TCK, BF63 ZRL, YX67 UYG).

30th January : Sittingbourne to Sheerness – Travelmasters (YJ53 VDV, YJ55 KZR, VE58 XKX).

30th January : Tonbridge to Paddock Wood – no reports.

5th February : Three Bridges area (to and from East Grinstead?)* - Ham (MC65 HAM, MC17 HAM, DW18 HAM, DW70 HAM).

6th February : Headcorn to Ashford International – Regent (SN15 AKX).

6th February : Rainham to Strood/Meopham – 1st Bus Stop (unidentified); London General (unspecified); Travelmasters (BK10 MFV, BF63 ZRL, a white E400 MMC).

6th February : East Grinstead to ?Three Bridges? – Brighton Horizon (FJ11 GKK, FJ61 EYK); Seaford and District (688).

12th February : Herne Bay to Margate – Crosskeys (PO58 NPY); London General (E234); Regent (BV63 OEW, SN15 AKX); Travelmasters (BJ11 DUA, SW16 LOW); YMS (T9 YMS).

13th February : Faversham to Ramsgate – Bayliss (YR61 RSO, YR61 RVC); Chalkwell (unidentified E400); London General (EN25); Travelmasters (unidentified); YMS (two unidentified, one white and one blue).

Items marked * were additional to pre-announced work.

The following emergencies have been reported :

17th January : Sittingbourne to Sheerness (signalling Issues between Sittingbourne and Kemsley) – Travelmasters (two unidentified).

20th January : Otford to Ashford International (signalling issues at Borough Green & Wrotham) – Travelmasters (four unidentified).

22nd January : Wadhurst to Hastings (signalling issues at Wadhurst) – no information.

28th January : Dartford/Ebbsfleet International to Strood – Ensign (130, 157); Arriva accepting tickets on B, 190, 191, 480.

29th January : Dover Priory to Ramsgate (person hit by train) - six vehicles (unidentified).

1st February : Strood to Gravesend (signalling issues at Hoo Junction) – 1st Bus Stop (one unidentified); , Dosanjh (one unidentified); Fastrack B accepting SouthEastern & Thameslink tickets.

2nd February : Sheerness area (reason unknown) – Travelmasters (SN56 AXA).

4th February : Hastings to Tunbridge Wells (reason unknown) – Go-Coachhire (7501). Rail tickets were accepted on Stagecoach services 254, 304 and 305.

9th February : Ashford International to Hastings (reason unknown) – Travelmasters (BJ11 DUA).

11th February : Ashford International/Dover Priory to Ramsgate (person hit by train) – Travelmasters (one unidentified); YMS (two unidentified).

15th February : Sheerness area (reason unknown) – Travelmasters (YX67 VYG).

18th February : Although it was not possible to provide large-scale replacement buses when services were suspended because of Storm Eunice, Go-Coachhire (two unidentified) ran between Hildenborough and Tonbridge to collect passengers off a stranded train which had hit a tree on the line, and a mid-evening trip between Chatham and Maidstone connecting with the one High Speed train which had managed to escape from St Pancras as far as Gillingham.

Some replacements were evident in the days following Storm Eunice. On 19th February, a service ran between Maidstone East and Otford (line blocked by fallen trees), though we have no details, and Ensign (708) ran between Tunbridge Wells and Hastings. There also seem to have been operations, some continuing into 20th February, between Canterbury East and Dover Priory (fast), and Shepherdswell and Dover Priory, as Dover Priory trains were terminating at Faversham, with a shuttle train to and from Shepherdswell. As all of this took place after our reporting deadline, we may have fuller information next month.

HISTORY CORNER



832/1 – EAST KENT EARLY ROUTE NUMBERING. Further to page 22/31, the shot of T 4362 cannot be at Folkestone Junction as suggested. The background and gradient are all wrong for that location, and the route board shows that the vehicle was on the Ashford service (which did not serve that point) rather than the 2. Where the shot was taken remains a matter of debate. Can anyone help? The picture is from Eric Baldock's collection.

834/1 – EAST KENT TIMETABLE CASES. Richard Wallace reports a timetable case in his possession with the identity "5T6" on the back. This does not fit the known sequence of identifications, nor any logical variant of them.

Back cover illustrations

upper : Stagecoach South East 10717, one of several Alexander Dennis MMCs lately moved to Herne Bay in exchange for similar Scania's, was a most unusual find at Reculver working the 7 on 28th January. At one time East Kent owned the reversing area here.

Ade Foale

lower : Arriva Kent & Surrey have started to repaint the Sapphire double-deckers at Gillingham into new corporate livery. 6476, previously branded for the 101, was photographed on the 700 at Chatham Waterfront bus station on 2nd February. *Martin Smith*

Printed by Kall Kwik, 103 Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1LF

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