

ROYAL BLUE RUN 2018, 15-17 June

Day 1 (Pink) – London (VCS) to Winchester

Day 2 (Yellow) – Winchester to Exeter / Tiverton

Day 3 (Green) – Exeter / Tiverton to Taunton



Background

Our Royal Blue Runs were established in 2002 so that owners and their passengers can relive the pleasures of long distance luxury coach travel for which their carefully preserved vehicles were originally intended. The aim is to follow original Royal Blue routes as closely as possible and to travel at a leisurely pace redolent of the times. The runs also create a wonderful spectacle for innocent bystanders and dedicated photographers alike, thanks to the hard work and resources the owners have devoted to restoring and maintaining their fine coaches.

A lot of work goes into planning the runs from selecting routes from the extensive Royal Blue network and researching the original drivers' instructions and passenger timetables, preparing maps and outline routing, driving the routes to develop detailed instructions allowing for modern day features and constraints, organising refreshment stops, obtaining parking permissions, to identifying potential accommodation for a dozen or more coaches and their passengers. Despite all the preparations, final timings are hard to judge whether due to roadworks or things that might pique the interest of crews along the way. The coaches do not travel in close convoy so as not to inconvenience other road users. Some drivers have also been known on occasion to deviate from the intended route (unintentionally!).

Overall the focus is on education and enjoyment and we hope that however you take part you share in the pleasure.

2018 Route

An illustrative overview of the 2018 routes is given above. The principal routing and probable stopping points are tabulated with indicative timings, below. These may be subject to change and anyone wanting to see the run pass is advised to recheck the website on 14 June for the latest plan. The website will not be updated in the course of the run but real-time updates may appear on Facebook.

The Day 1 route is following a Southdown route From London (Victoria Coach Station) to East Grinstead. From there the run follows the joint Southdown and Royal Blue route to Bournemouth operated in the 1950s and '60s, going as far as Winchester on Day 1. The run crosses the Thames at Vauxhall Bridge and on through Purley and Caterham. From East Grinstead the route goes via Crawley, Horsham, Billingshurst and Petworth. However, major roadworks completely closing the through route at Midhurst mean a diversion towards Haslemere then south again to Petersfield is required before continuing on to Winchester.

Day 2 begins with an early start and picks up the joint Southdown - Royal Blue route on from Winchester to Bournemouth via Ringwood. From there the Royal Blue service from Bournemouth to Barnstaple, dating from the Elliott Brothers era in the early 1930s, is followed as far as Tiverton. Leaving Bournemouth the route crosses Poole Bridge and continues on through Lytchett Minster and Wareham to Dorchester (for lunch). Traditional routing via Crewkerne, Chard, Ilminster, Taunton and Wellington continues on over the Blackdown Hills through Hemyock, Culmstock and Uffculme to Willand. Our original intention was to complete the day at Tiverton but because it has recently been announced that Exeter Coach Station will be finally closed for redevelopment on the evening of 16th June we shall, by kind permission of Stagecoach South West, visit the Coach Station for the very last time to complete Day 2 of our Run.

Day 3 begins in Tiverton continuing the Royal Blue route to Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. From there the Royal Blue Ilfracombe-Taunton service is picked up going through Combe Martin and across Exmoor to Wheddon Cross, Dunster and Minehead. The route goes via Williton to Taunton where the full run will now terminate as access for group parking in Bristol has recently been restricted. While some coaches will head south and west, others will nevertheless continue up the A38 towards Bristol and compass points beyond.

2018 Participating Coaches

Fleet no	Reg No	Type	Date	Company
279	EMW284	Bristol L6B/Be C32R	1947	Wilts & Dorset
1250	LTA729	Bristol LL6B/Duple C37F	1951	Royal Blue
	GFN273	Leyland-Beadle/Be	1952	East Kent
1286	MOD973	Bristol LS6G/ECW C39F	1952	Royal Blue
1299	OTT98	Bristol LS6G/ECW C39F	1953	Royal Blue
2200	OTT43	Bristol LS6G/ECW C39F	1953	Royal Blue
1781	TUO497	Bristol LS6G/ECW B41F	1956	Southern National
2267	56GUO	Bristol MW6G/ECW C39F	1961	Royal Blue
2270	253KTA	Bristol MW6G/ECW C39F	1962	Royal Blue
425	275KTA	Bristol SUL4A/ECW C33F	1962	Western National
2351	837SUO	Bristol RELH6G/ECW C45F	1964	Royal Blue
CRG106	AFM106G	Bristol RELH6G/ECW C47F	1969	Crosville
1460	OTA632G	Bristol RELH6G/ECW C45F	1969	Southern National
2098	PWS492S	Leyland PSU3/4R/Plaxton DP49F	1987	Badgerline

The above coaches are expected to join some or all the run but the owners may have to withdraw or substitute vehicles due to unforeseen illness or mechanical problems. This is beyond the organisers' control and any disappointment is regretted.

Day 1 – LONDON (VICTORIA COACH STATION) - WINCHESTER

Time	Location and routing
10.30	London (VCS)(dep) Vauxhall Bridge A202 past the Oval A23 to Purley and A22 to Whyteleafe A2208 into Caterham
11.45	Caterham A22 to Godstone Interchange B2235 into Godstone A22 to East Grinstead
12.30	East Grinstead B2110 To Turner's Hill B2036 for Crawley via Tulley's Farm
13.00	Tulley's Farm (arr)
13.45	Tulley's Farm (dep) B2036 to Crawley A2220 and A2004 through Crawley A264 for Horsham B2195 into Horsham A281 to Broadbridge Heath
14.30	Broadbridge Heath A264 for Billingshurst A29 into Billingshurst A272 to Wisborough Green and Petworth A283 through Petworth
15.45	Petworth A272 to Easebourne Through Easebourne onto A286 toward Haslemere Onto A287 then B2131to Liphook
16.15	Liphook B2070 to Petersfield A272 for Winchester Enter Winchester via A31 and B3330
17.30	Winchester Coach Park, Worthy Lane (arr)

Day 2 - WINCHESTER - TIVERTON (& EXETER)

Time	Location and routing
08.30	Winchester Coach Park A3090 to Romsey
09.05	Romsey A3090 to M27 junction 1 A31 to Ringwood A347 into Ferndown and Bournemouth A3060 and Wimborne Road to Queen's Road Coach Park
10.15	Bournemouth Coach Park (arr)
10.30	Bournemouth Coach Park (dep) A35 to Branksome A3061 to Parkstone A350 into Poole then over old Poole Bridge
11.00	Poole B3068 to Upton B3067 to Lytchett Minster A351 to Wareham B3075 into Wareham
11.40	Wareham B3070 then A352 to Wool and Dorchester B3144 / B3143 / B3147 into Dorchester
12.30	Dorchester (arr)
13.15	Dorchester (dep) A37 toward Yeovil taking A352 through Charminster A356 to Crewkerne
14.15	Crewkerne A30 to Chard B3162 into Chard
14.45	Chard A358 to Peasmarsh and Ilminster A358 at A303 junction to Taunton via Ashill and Hatch Beauchamp

15.30	Taunton A38 into Taunton via Hamilton Road depot and East Reach to Taunton Bus Station A38 / B3187 to Wellington
16.00	Wellington Out via South Street onto the Blackdown Hills Through Ford Street, Hemyock and on B3391 to Culmstock B3440 to Uffculme and Willand
17.00	Willand A3181 via Broadclyst to Exeter
17.45	Exeter Coach Station (arr)
18.15	Exeter Coach Station (dep A377 and A396 to Tiverton via Rewe Enter Tiverton via B3391 to hotels
19.00	Tiverton

Day 3 – TIVERTON – TAUNTON (via BARNSTAPLE)

Time	Location and routing
09.00	Tiverton Bus Station (dep) A361 towards Braunton and Barnstaple Via B3227 into South Molton Continue on B3226 through Filleigh and Swimbridge into Barnstaple
10.30	Barnstaple Coach Park (arr by Tesco Superstore)
10.45	Barnstaple Coach Park (dep) A3125 over bridge and along The Strand B3149 then A361 for Braunton and Ilfracombe
11.30	Ilfracombe A399 to Watermouth Bay
11.45	Watermouth Bay (arr)
12.30	Watermouth Bay (dep) A399 to Combe Martin A399 through Blackmoor Gate and onto Exmoor B3558 to Challacombe and Simonsbath B3223 through Simonsbath
13.30	Simonsbath B3224 to Wheddon Cross A396 to Dunster A39 to Minehead
14.15	Minehead (arr) Coach Park adjacent to West Somerset Railway
14.45	Minehead (dep) A39 to Williton A358 to Taunton
15.45	Taunton