

Vehicle Profile: LTA893 THAMES VALLEY & GREAT WESTERN

An initial look at a vehicle in the TV&GWOT Collection

 Omnibus Trust



1264, entered service in April 1951 and was a Southern National owned vehicle in the Royal Blue fleet, based at Bournemouth for most of its operational life. It was the first 30ft long coach to be delivered to Southern National following the increase in maximum permitted length from 27ft 6in.

After 12 years on Royal Blue express services, 1264 was withdrawn in May 1963 and sold to dealers W. North (PV) of Sherburn-in-Elmet (S Yorks) in February 1964. 1264 was purchased in June 1964 by H Webster of Pattishall (Northants) to transport railway permanent way contractors' personnel to and from their work sites. Websters put 1264 up for sale positioning a large sign in the coach windows with it parked parallel to the railway in a yard being used by the company for its railway transport contract. The ploy worked and it was a passenger from a passing train who purchased 1264 for preservation, reported by the PSV Circle reports as "by 1969". It was driven to Devon and parked on family property in a field at Bowd where it was to remain for more than 50 years.

TV&GWOT Trustees kept an eye on it but the owner was unwilling to pass it on and it sadly deteriorated decade by decade, not helped by the resident sheep. When the owner died he left 1264 to the Oxford Bus Museum in his will but the coach was outwith their collecting policy and they formally offered it to TVG&WOT.

Over several months in 2020 Trustees and Supporters had a series of socially distanced working parties to unearth and shore up 1264 so that it could be transported safely. It was a true team effort with additional roles played by local Farmer Willy Rich and new friends at the nearby Donkey Sanctuary. The final recovery trip was on 9 September 2020 and 1264 is now stored under-cover while the future of this iconic Royal Blue coach is contemplated.

DATA PANEL

Registration: LTA 893

Type: Bristol LL6B

Built: 1951

Engine: Bristol AVW

Body: Duple, C37F

Operator: Southern National/Royal Blue