

ROYAL BLUE RUN 2017, 16-18 June

Day 1 (Pink) – Northampton to Bournemouth

Day 2 (Yellow) – Bournemouth to Exmouth and Exeter

Day 3 (Green) – Exeter to Windsor



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 some 15 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!). In 2017 the tight turns on the service route for Day 2 mean some (larger) coaches may take the alternative (duplicate) coach route at critical points.

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

2017 Route

An illustrative overview of the 2017 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 15 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 long-running Associated Motorways route which was operated by Royal Blue. The principal service was from Northampton to Portsmouth but one journey a day went to Bournemouth. Passengers from Northampton changed at Oxford for the Bournemouth coach but the 2017 recreation of the route is saving passengers the trouble. In fact, the run will bypass Oxford and its modern day congestion.

Day 2 follows a long-standing Royal Blue route from Bournemouth to Exmouth. The terminus before Exeter was because of Devon General's objection (upheld by the Traffic Commissioner) to the competition of Royal Blue with local bus services. As a consequence, passengers wanting to travel on to Exeter had to change in Exmouth and catch a Devon General service bus to the city.

Royal Blue operated the Exeter-London service being followed on Day 3. Only summer weekend services went this way via Salisbury, Stockbridge, Sutton Scotney, Basingstoke, etc. The more common routing was via Amesbury, Andover etc to serve the army bases. The direct route being recreated in 2017 was principally for holiday makers from the London area and was a quicker non-stop service, effectively cutting off a corner.

2017 Participating Coaches

Fleet no	Reg No	Type	Date new	Company
279	EMW284	Bristol L6B/Be C32R	1947	Wilts & Dorset
1250	LTA729	Bristol LL6B/Duple C37F	1951	Royal Blue
1299	OTT98	Bristol LS6G/ECW C39F	1953	Royal Blue
2246	625DDV	Bristol MW6G/ECW C39F	1960	Royal Blue
2250	617DDV	Bristol MW6G/ECW C39F	1960	Royal Blue
2267	56GUO	Bristol MW6G/ECW C39F	1961	Royal Blue
425	275KTA	Bristol SUL4A/ECW C33F	1962	Western National
904	FEL751D	Bristol MW6G/ECW C39F	1966	Hants & Dorset
1423	EDV505D	Bristol MW6G/ECW C39F	1966	Western National
RC968	OAX9F	Bristol RELH6G/ECW C45F	1968	Red & White
2380	OTA640G	Bristol RELH6G/ECW C45F	1969	Royal Blue
CRG103	AFM103G	Bristol RELH6G/ECW C47F	1969	Crosville
CRG106	AFM106G	Bristol RELH6G/ECW C47F	1969	Crosville
1460	OTA632G	Bristol RELH6G/ECW C45F	1969	Southern National

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 – NORTHAMPTON - BOURNEMOUTH

Time	Location and routing
10.30	Northampton (dep) Sixfields Towcester Road through Blisworth A43 onto Northampton Road through Towcester
11.10	Towcester A43 then A413 through Silverstone A43 then Northampton Road through Brackley A43 onto B4100 through Bicester
12.10	Bicester Oxford Road onto A41, A34 Through Kidlington, A4260, A44 to A34
12.30	Oxford Peartree Jn A34 Oxford Ring Road
12.45	Oxford A34 South Jn Through Bagley Wood, A4183 into Abingdon
13.05	Abingdon B4017 through Drayton and Steventon A4130 past Milton Hill, A4185 A34 turning off for East Ilsley
13.35	East Ilsley A34 turning off for Beedon passing Chieveley Under M4 then B4494 to Donnington. Oxford Road, Oxford Street into Newbury Wharf Coach Park.
14.00	Newbury (arr)
14.30	Newbury (dep) A339, A343 to Andover A3057 to cross A303
15.15	Andover (A303 jn) A3057 to Stockbridge B3049 to Winchester Hotel (Coach Park) Worthy Lane
15.55	Winchester Coach Park B3040, A3090, B3043 to Chandler's Ford A33 then via London Road to Bedford Place, Southampton
16.35	Southampton Circuit via Western Esplanade (A3024), West Quay Road (A33) to Town Quay Retrace Western Esplanade (A3024) then A33 West A35 to Lyndhurst
17.10	Lyndhurst A35, B3058 to New Milton
17.40	New Milton A337, B3059 to Christchurch
18.00	Christchurch A35 entering Bournemouth via Christchurch Road, West Cliff to Westbourne Coach Park
18.25	Bournemouth West Coach Park (arr)

Day 2 - BOURNEMOUTH - EXMOUTH (& EXETER)

Time	Location and routing	
10.00	Bournemouth West Coach Park Poole Road A35, A350 to Poole	
10.20	Poole Poole Bridge or Twin Sails Bridge (if Poole Bridge still closed) B3067 through Lytchett Minster A351, B3075 to Wareham	
10.45	Wareham B3070, A352 through Wool A353, B3155 to Weymouth	
11.35	Weymouth A353, B3157 to Abbotsbury	
12.10	Abbotsbury B3157 to Bridport, Tannery Road Coach Station	
12.45	Bridport (arr)	
13.30	Bridport (dep) A35 through Chideock and Morecombelake Fork off through Charmouth A3052 into Lyme Regis (service car route) or A35, B3261 to Axminster (duplicate coaches)	
14.10	Lyme Regis (service car route) A3052, B3172 to Axmouth and Seaton	Axminster (duplicate coach route) A358, B3172 to Axmouth and Seaton
14.40	Seaton Harbour Road, B3172 <i>[smaller coaches may take B3174 via Beer, Square]</i> A3052, A375 (formerly B3175) to Sidmouth	
15.20	Sidmouth B3176, A3052 B3178 to Budleigh Salterton	
15.50	Budleigh Salterton B3178 to Exmouth	
16.10	Exmouth (arr)	
16.30	Exmouth (dep) A376 to Exeter hotels	
17.00	Exeter	

Day 3 – EXETER - WINDSOR

Time	Location and routing
08.00	Exeter Coach Station (dep) B3183, A3015 to A30/M5 junction B3174 via Rockbeare, then Fairmile, Fenny Bridges, B3177 to Honiton
08.35	Honiton Exeter Road, High Street onto A30 A30 fork from A303 to Yarcombe
09.00	Yarcombe A30
09.15	Chard A30
09.35	Crewkerne A30 into Yeovil via Brunswick Street to Bus Station
09.55	Yeovil A30
10.10	Sherborne A30 in to Shaftesbury via Bleke Street, High Street
10.50	Shaftesbury Salisbury Road to A30 A30, A36 to Salisbury Mill Stream Approach Coach Station
11.40	Salisbury (arr)
11.55	Salisbury (dep) A30
12.35	Stockbridge A30, turning off into Sutton Scotney on Stockbridge Road
12.55	Sutton Scotney A30 then old A30 past Micheldever Station A303, A30 into Basingstoke From Brighton Hill Rbt into Cranbourne via Harrow Way, Grove Road, Hackwood Road to Black Dam roundabout
13.25	Basingstoke Black Dam A30 through Hook to Hartley Wintney
13.50	Hartley Wintney A30
14.15	Bagshot A30, A322, A332 to Windsor
14.35	Windsor area / dispersal