

Vehicle Profile: OTA 290G

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



**THAMES VALLEY &
GREAT WESTERN**
Omnibus Trust

(c) Ken Jones

This vehicle, Fleet No. 1056, was one of the first batch of VRs that Western National put into service in 1969. This started a long and now celebrated association between VRs and the West County, the final closed-top bus operation not being until 9 December 2006, some 37 years later. On the third Sunday each year, TV&GWOT, in association with the Cornwall Bus Preservation Society, takes VR buses (often including 1056) and other historic buses to Penzance for a "VR Revival and Vintage Bus Running Day" on picturesque routes around the West Cornwall peninsula.

Whilst others from the batch were to move away, 1056 always operated in the West Country largely in the Plymouth area but also spending two years on loan to North Devon (at Barnstaple, Bideford and Ilfracombe depots) and a year at Camborne.

1056 was withdrawn from service in 1991 but remained in Plymouth being put on loan to the Western National Preservation Group (WNPG). Behind the scenes it transitioned to First Western National Buses and then First Devon & Cornwall ownership, being given a modern fleet number 90179 in 2004. It was however, rallied extensively by WNPG particularly at their Plymouth rallies on the Hoe. It had been returned to Tilling Green livery in 1993 and bore traditional 1056 fleet number plates throughout this period.

Ownership passed from First briefly to the WNPG in 2009 but 1056 was then sold to Colin Billington, TV&GWOT Chairman. New window rubbers were fitted and a total repaint carried out with traditional fleetnames applied so 1056 is an authentic representation of Western National VR fleet. On long term loan to TV&GWOT since January 2017, 1056 is a popular turn for visitors to TV&GWOT's running days.

DATA PANEL

Registration: OTA 290G

Type: Bristol VRT/SLXG Series 2

Built: 1969

Engine: Gardner 6LX

Body: Eastern Coach Works VR Mark 1, H39/31F

Operator: Western National