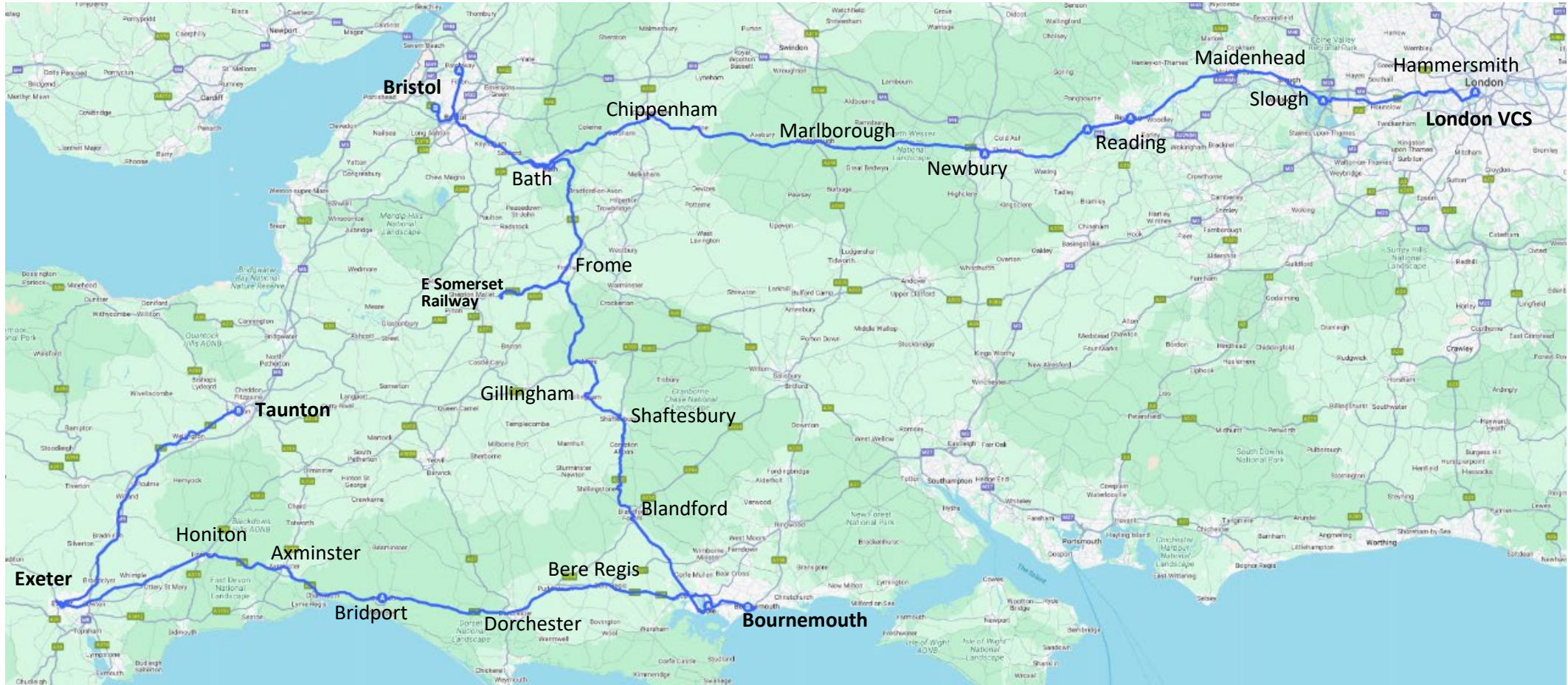


ROYAL BLUE RUN 2025, 20-22 June

Day 1 – 20 June – London (Victoria Coach Station) to Bristol via Hammersmith, Slough, Maidenhead, Reading, Newbury, Marlborough, Chippenham & Bath

Day 2 – 21 June – Bristol to Bournemouth (& Poole) via Bath, Frome, (East Somerset Railway), Gillingham, Shaftesbury, Blandford Forum and Poole

Day 3 – 22 June – Poole to Exeter (& Taunton) via Bere Regis, Dorchester, Bridport, Axminster and Honiton



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. Drivers may also deviate from the suggested route (intentionally or unintentionally!).

For those watching the run, it is important to note that the timings are indicative and many factors may affect the out-turn on the day. In addition the coaches / drivers are free to do some or all of the run each day and some have been known to insert their own route variations, so we cannot guarantee a steady stream of all the listed coaches at the nominated time. The organisers have driven the full route several times and endeavour to keep up with the latest news on roadworks and local events.

2025 route and heritage significance

An illustrative overview of the 2025 route is given on the cover page. Further details of the principal routing and probable stopping points with indicative timings are tabulated at the end of this introduction – they may double as a useful aide memoir for drivers. Also included are the research notes relating to Royal Blue and Associated Motorways operations over the years which provide the rationale for the detailed routing.

Day 1 (Friday 20 June) The beginning of long-distance coach services can be determined in several ways, but the first to run all year round on a daily basis, picking up and setting down passengers at various towns along the route, was that initiated by Greyhound Motors, of Bristol. Using a pair of Strachan and Brown bodied Dennis coaches, this operated between London (Hammersmith) and Bristol, and began in February 1925. This year, therefore marks the centenary of the start of this service. Royal Blue also set up a service along the route in 1928, and from 1932 until 1965 these two operators jointly worked this service (after which it became just a Greyhound route). From the mid 1930s, both operators had been taken over - Greyhound by Bristol Tramways & Carriage Company, and Royal Blue by Southern / Western National (the latter also controlling the Bristol concern). Although normally Royal Blue runs have not recreated the same route as on previous occasions, the centenary of this inaugural service is considered an exception that should be marked. *Not all participating coaches will start the run at VCS, some joining at Newbury.*

Day 2 (Saturday 21 June) Early in 1927, Greyhound opened another route, from Bristol to Bournemouth, where initially their agent was Elliott Bros (Royal Blue) - until the latter started their own service between those places! There were two alternative routes - either via Shaftesbury or via Salisbury, and the Royal Blue run 2025 will follow the former.

Day 3 (Sunday 22 June) The take-over of Royal Blue by Southern / Western National took place in 1935, so this year marks the 90th anniversary of that event, when the company head office was moved from Bournemouth to Exeter (although many administrative and engineering functions remained in Bournemouth), so the third day of the 2025 run will link them. *Several coaches will follow a former Royal Blue route from Exeter to Taunton as they head north and east at the end of the three-day coach run.*

2025 Participating Coaches

The following coaches are anticipated to be taking part for some or all of the run (*as of 14/6/25*)

Fleet no	Reg No	Chassis/Type	Year	Operator	Notes
	MXB733	AEC Regal rebuild/ECW	1938/52	Tilling (BTC)	Days 2 & 3
279	EMW284	Bristol L6B / Beadle	1947	Wilts & Dorset	
1250	LTA729	Bristol LL6B / Duple	1951	Royal Blue	
1286	MOD973	Bristol LS6G / ECW	1952	Royal Blue	
1291	MOD978	Bristol LS6G / ECW	1952	Royal Blue	
2200	OTT43	Bristol LS6G / ECW	1953	Royal Blue	
2267	56GU0	Bristol MW6G / ECW	1961	Royal Blue	
2270	253KTA	Bristol MW6G / ECW	1962	Western National Royal Blue	
2138	BHU92C	Bristol MW6G / ECW	1965	Bristol Omnibus Co Greyhound	
2365	HDV624E	Bristol RELH6G / ECW	1967	Royal Blue (Southern National)	
1460	OTA632G	Bristol RELH / ECW	1969	Southern National	
2380	OTA640G	Bristol RELH6G / ECW	1969	Royal Blue (Southern National)	
278	TBD278G	Bristol RELH6G / ECW	1969	United Counties	
1482	RDV433H	Bristol RELH6G / ECW	1970	Royal Blue (Western National)	Day 3

Route Details

Coaches/crews participating in the run are at liberty to take alternative routes, set off early and/or add in breaks as they wish. The outline follows original routing as closely as practicably possible and *approximate* coach timings are given below.

Day 1, 20 June – LONDON (VCS) - BRISTOL

Time	Location and routing
0905-1000	Victoria Coach Station Coaches displayed at VCS
1000	Victoria Coach Station Via Chelsea Embankment, A315 High Street Kensington, Hammersmith (Broadway) and Chiswick A4 to Osterley Park A3005 into Jersey Road and back to A4 A4 passing Heathrow A4 Colnbrook bypass A4 over M25 to Slough Upton Court Road A332 ⁰ to central Slough
1130	Slough A4 to Maidenhead B3028 through town centre A4 to Reading via Cemetery Junction
1230	Reading A4, Southampton Street, under flyover, Castle Hill (A4155) through Reading A4 to Theale Through Theale (High Street) A4 to Newbury A339(S) to Bus & Coach Station
1315-1415	Newbury (Wharf) A339(N) from Bus & Coach Station A4 to Marlborough
1455	Marlborough A4 to Chippenham
1540	Chippenham Causeway through town centre A4 through Corsham and Box to Batheaston Through Batheaston A4 Cleveland Bridge, North Parade Road into Bath

Approximate timings – not a guaranteed timetable – and may be influenced by conditions en route

Time	Location and routing
1625	Bath Bath Spa Railway Station, Midland Bridge Road A36 Lower Bristol Road A4 to Keynsham Through Keynsham A4 through Brislington to Bristol
1730	Bristol Temple Way, Bond Street, City Centre (St Augustine's Place) Anchor Road, Hotwell Road (A4), Bridge Valley Road (A4176) to Clifton Downs
1750	Bristol – Clifton Downs – gather and disperse

Day 2, 21 June – BRISTOL – BOURNEMOUTH (via E Somerset Railway. Continuing to POOLE)

Time	Location and routing
0900-0935	Bristol Aerospace, Filton A38 Gloucester Road through Filton and Horfield
1005	Bristol (Marlborough Street) Bus & Coach Station drive through Bond Street, Temple Way A4 through Brislington to Keynsham Through Keynsham (High Street) A4 Newbridge Road, Upper Bristol Road to Bath
1105	Bath Queen's Square, George Street, The Paragon, A4, Cleveland Bridge, Bathwick Street A36 to Bathampton and on through Claverton to Beckington Through Beckington and Oldford B3090 into Frome
1145	Frome B3090 Market Place, out via Marsden Road A361 via Nunnery Catch, Dean to Cranmore (ESR)
1205-1345	East Somerset Railway A361 via Nunney Catch B3092 to Maiden Bradley and Stourhead turn <u>Immediately</u> L onto Bells Lane for Zeals and Mere Shaftesbury Road and Bay Road into Gillingham
1450	Gillingham High Street through town centre B3081 to Shaftesbury
1510	Shaftesbury B3091 through Shaftesbury town centre A350 via Cann, Fontmell Magna, Iwerne Minster, Stourpaine to Blandford Forum
1540	Blandford Forum B3082 through town centre & Blandford St Mary A350 through Charlton Marshall, Spetisbury and Sturminster Marshall to A35 jn B3068 into Upton, over lifting bridge to Poole

Time	Location and routing
1625	Poole West Quay Road, George rbt, Parkstone Road, North Road, B3061 Ashley Road A35 Poole Road to Bournemouth
1650	Bournemouth Poole Road, Poole Hill, Terrace Road, Exeter Road B3066 Bath Road to St Peter's Roundabout Return via Bath Road, Exeter Road, Terrace Road, Poole Hill, Poole Road to Queen's Road Coach Park
1700	Bournemouth Queen's Road Coach Park Assemble and disperse for Poole Poole

Day 2 end

1710	Bournemouth Queen's Road Coach Park Poole Road A35 Bournemouth Road Parkstone Road, Mount Pleasant Road, Kingsland Road
1730	Poole Disperse

Day 3, 22 June – POOLE – EXETER (via BRIDPORT. Continuing to TAUNTON)

Time	Location and routing
0945-1000	Poole Coach Park (Stadium Way) B3095 Wimborne Road A35 to Fleetsbridge rbt Upton Road B3067 through Upton and Lytchett Minster A35 to Bere Regis
1030	Bere Regis West Street through village centre A35 Filter off and through Tolpuddle, Puddletown A35 B3150 into Dorchester
1100	Dorchester B3150 through town centre and round Poundbury A35 to Bridport B3162 through town
1140-1230	Bridport (Bus and Coach Station) B3162 A35 Filter off through Charmouth A35 B3261 to Axminster through town centre
1310	Axminster B3261 Lyme Street, West Street through town centre A35 to Honiton
1335	Honiton High Street through town centre A30 Filter off for B3177 through Fenny Bridges, Fairmile, Rockbeare, Clyst Honiton A3015, B3183 into Exeter Paris Street, New North Road St David's Hill to Exeter Station

Time	Location and routing
1420-1430	Exeter Railway Station St David's Hill, Queen Street, Paul Street, South Street, Western Way B3212 to Pinhoe B3181 via Broadclyst, Cullompton, Willand A38 Through Rockwell Green B3187 through Wellington A38 into Taunton Park Street, Tower Street alongside former bus & coach station
1545	Taunton Assemble and disperse