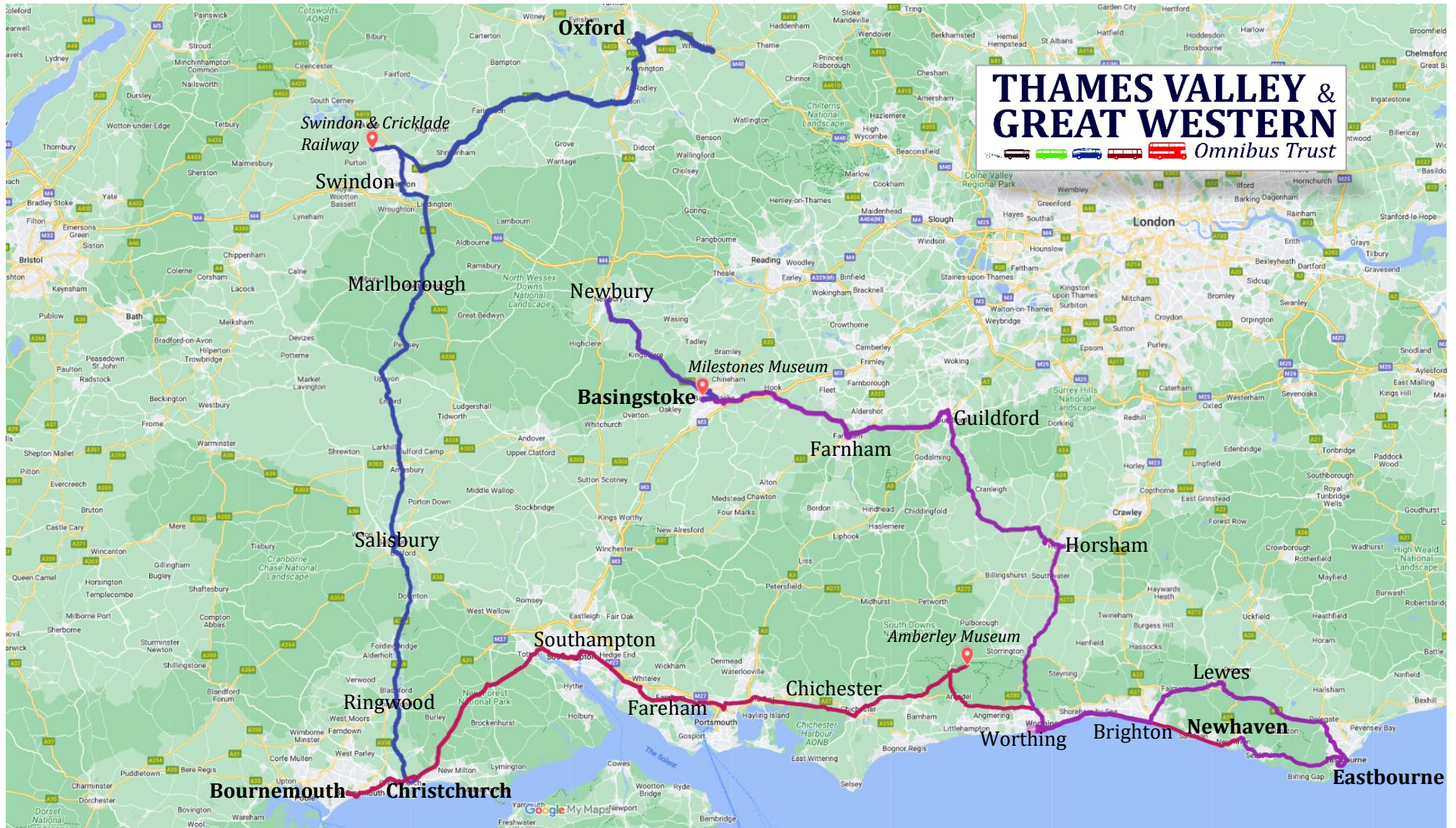


ROYAL BLUE RUN 2024, 21-23 June

Day 1 (Blue) – 21 June – Oxford to Christchurch via Abingdon, Swindon, Marlborough, Salisbury and Ringwood

Day 2 (Red) – 22 June – Bournemouth to Newhaven (& Eastbourne) via Southampton, Fareham, Chichester, Worthing and Brighton

Day 3 (Purple) – 23 June – Eastbourne (& Newhaven) to Basingstoke (& Newbury) via Lewes, Brighton, Worthing, Horsham, Guildford, Farnham



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!).

2024 is the 90th anniversary of the founding of Associated Motorways, and the 95th anniversary of the inauguration of Royal Blue's coastal service from Bournemouth to Sussex and Margate (followed a few weeks later by a competitive service by Southdown and East Kent!). Our route this year therefore incorporates sections of routes worked by Associated Motorways and Royal Blue.

The trip combines extracts from a number of Royal Blue services. The organisers have driven the full route several times and endeavour to keep up with the latest news on roadworks and local events.

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.

2024 route

An illustrative overview of the 2024 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 21 June) of the Royal Blue & Associated Motorways Run 2024 goes from Oxford to Swindon following the route used as part of one of the Royal Blue / Greyhound services from London to Bristol. From there part of one of the Associated Motorways routes from Cheltenham to Bournemouth is taken through Marlborough, Pewsey, Amesbury and Salisbury as far as Christchurch (which was worked by Royal Blue coaches, and most of which is 'new' on a Royal Blue run.).

The principal departure point on which coaches will converge from the south and east up the A40 (part of the former joint Royal Blue / Greyhound service from VCS to Oxford) is the Motorway Services off the M40 with the route going through central Oxford. A number of other coaches arriving from the north will instead take the Associated Motorways route from Coventry, stopping for modern facilities at Peartree Services. The coaches will come together to the south-west of Oxford. Other coaches travelling from the south and west may join at the lunch stop at Swindon & Cricklade Railway. The full complement of coaches will run from Swindon to Christchurch.

Day 2 (Saturday 22 June) begins with coaches completing the Associated Motorways route (that ran from Cheltenham) running in to Bournemouth from Christchurch. Departing then from Bournemouth's Queen's Road coach park the coaches will head eastwards along the route of the South Coast Express - in the post-war era worked jointly by Royal Blue, Southdown and East Kent, using the 'through coach' route that called at Hilsa (but not the double run into Portsmouth). A short diversion is planned east of Chichester to visit the Chalk Pits Museum at Amberley. Beyond Brighton, we will follow the coastal route towards Eastbourne (some coaches stopping overnight at Newhaven).

Day 3 (Sunday 23 June) begins with the Newhaven based coaches completing the South Coast Express route to Eastbourne. Departing from Grand Parade the coaches return from Eastbourne to Brighton using the alternative route of the South Coast Express via Lewes, before following the Associated Motorways service (which ran from Eastbourne to Cheltenham) via Worthing, Horsham, Guildford, Farnham and Odiham to Basingstoke, to visit the Milestones Museum there. *Depending on ultimate destinations, some coaches may continue along the Associated Motorways route from Basingstoke to Newbury (from where there is a variety of routes for participants to head home).*

2024 Participating Coaches

The following coaches are anticipated to be taking part for some or all of the run (*as of 14/6/24*)

Fleet no	Reg No	Chassis/Type	Year	Operator	Notes
279	EMW284	Bristol L6B / Beadle	1947	Wilts & Dorset	
1250	LTA729	Bristol LL6B / Duple	1951	Royal Blue	
1286	MOD973	Bristol LS6G / ECW	1952	Royal Blue	
2200	OTT43	Bristol LS6G / ECW	1953	Royal Blue	
2206	VDV749	Bristol LS6G / ECW	1957	Royal Blue	
2267	56GU0	Bristol MW6G / ECW	1961	Royal Blue	
2270	253KTA	Bristol MW6G / ECW	1962	Western National Royal Blue	
1431	CVL850D	Bristol RELH / ECW	1966	Lincolnshire	
2150	FHW156D	Bristol MW6G / ECW	1966	Bristol Omnibus Co Greyhound	
RC.968	OAX9F	Bristol RELH-6L / ECW	1968	Red & White Services	
1460	OTA 632G	Bristol RELH / ECW	1969	Southern National	
2380	OTA640G	Bristol RELH6G / ECW	1969	Royal Blue (Southern National)	
1482	RDV433H	Bristol RELH6G / ECW	1970	Royal Blue (Western National)	Not Fri

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, 21 June – OXFORD (M40) SERVICES - CHRISTCHURCH

Time	Location and routing	Coaching history and information
1030	<p>M40 Services Through Wheatley A40 and A420 Magdalen Bridge, Longwall Street, (Soth) Parks Road, Banbury Road, St Giles, Beaumont Steet</p>	
1100	<p>Oxford Worcester Street*¹ A4144 A423 (w) A4183</p>	<p><i>*¹ The Gloucester Green Coach Station was behind the buildings on the LHS</i></p>
1125	<p>Abingdon High Street, Ock Street*¹ A415 Into Kingston Bagpuize (Faringdon Road) A420 Into Faringdon (London Street, Market Place*², Marlborough Street, Coxwell Street/Road) A420 Into Shrivenham (High Street*³, Townsend Road) A420</p>	<p><i>*¹ The coach stop was at The Regal Cinema</i></p> <p><i>*² Royal Blue coach stop</i></p> <p><i>*³ Royal Blue coach stop by Dike's Stores</i></p>
1235	<p>A419 Whitehart Rbt A419 (n) B4534 for Blunsdon Tadpole Lane</p>	
1255-1415	<p>Swindon & Cricklade Railway Tadpole Lane B4534 back toward A419 jn A4311 Cricklade Road, County Road *¹, magic roundabout, Drove Road, Groundwell Road*², Victoria Road</p>	<p><i>*¹ The original route turned right here onto Manchester Road, and then Corporation Street, but at the far end of that traffic now has to turn in the opposite direction.</i></p> <p><i>*² The coach stop was in Euclid Street, off to the right, near the church at the far end, but parking and one-way restrictions make that impractical for coaches to turn into now</i></p>

Time	Location and routing	Coaching history and information
1445	Swindon Old Town Devizes Road, Marlborough Road B4006 A4259 A419 to M4 Junction A346 through Ogbournes	
1515	Marlborough New Road, High Street* ¹ to rbt at far end A345 through Pewsey, Upavon, Durrington* ²	<i>*¹ The coach stop was on the left about half way towards the church</i> <i>*² Where the firm of Heaver had their coachworks</i>
1600	Amesbury A345 (Countess Road* ¹ and mini roundabouts* ²) A345	<i>*¹ The Druid's Café Royal Blue refreshment stop was on the LHS where the new housing stands</i> <i>*² Wilts & Dorset bus station on RHS where coach stop used to be</i>
1615	Salisbury A345 to ring road junction* ¹ A36 (e) A338	<i>*¹ The former coach station lies ahead but is closed for remodelling - the project has been delayed, opening due early July</i>
1625-1640	Britford Park & Ride A338 through Downton, Breamore, Burgate Into Fordingbridge A338 passing Ibsley, Blashford to rbt with A31	
1715	Ringwood B3347 (Mansfield Road onto Christchurch Road* ¹ at rbt) B3347 through Avon, Sopley, Winkton, Burton to rbt with Christchurch bypass A35 A35	<i>*¹ The coach stop was in the Market Place to the RHS of the rbt but road closures and one-way systems preclude going there. Next rbt is on the site of the former level crossing over the original Southampton and Dorchester railway</i>
1735	Christchurch	

Day 2, 22 June – CHRISTCHURCH – BOURNEMOUTH - NEWHAVEN - EASTBOURNE

Time	Location and routing	Coaching history and information
0820	Christchurch B3347/A35 rbt A35 (Barrack Road, A35 past Pokesdown station into Boscombe) B3064 over rbts into Bath Road and past pier	
0840	Bournemouth Exeter Road, Terrace Road* ¹ , Commercial Road, Poole Hill, Poole Road, right into Queen’s Road for coach park	<i>*¹ The ‘Bournemouth One’ retail and leisure complex on RHS stands on the site of the former Royal Blue coach station</i>
0850-0900	Bournemouth Queen’s Road Coach Park Queen’s Road, Poole Road, Poole Hill, Commercial Road, Terrace Road to TL* ¹ Exeter Road down past pier and up Bath Road* ² Ahead at rbts to Lansdowne* ³ A35 (Christchurch Road to Boscombe* ⁴) A35 (ahead over Iford Bridge onto Barrack Road)	<i>*¹ Pavilion Road, directly opposite, was the exit from the Royal Blue coach station following the rebuilding in 1959</i> <i>*² As road rises to Royal Bath hotel, the car park on LHS by The Pavilion occupies the site of the former Royal Blue 1930s’ Bath Road Garage and later Hants & Dorset head office</i> <i>*³ In the 1920s/30s, Royal Blue had a small garage and booking office just to the left of the Lansdowne public house</i> <i>*⁴ Near one-way system, service coaches used to turn left into Warwick Road, then right into Wickham Road and Hannington Road where there was a coach stop, turning left to rejoin Christchurch Road</i>
0930	Christchurch A35 (At TL L into Stour Road, R into Bargates* ¹) A35 (pass Cat and Fiddle Inn* ²) A35 to Holmsley* ³ A35	<i>*¹ The coach stop was just before the large rbt</i> <i>*² A favourite spot for Royal Blue’s horse drawn carriages of the later 19th century to have a refreshment break</i> <i>*³ The road crosses the erstwhile Southampton to Dorchester railway line (known as Castleman’s Corkscrew) avoiding Bournemouth</i>
0950	Lyndhurst A35 onto Southampton Road after shops* ¹ A35 through Ashurst, following around Totton by-pass and over River Test	<i>*¹ The coach stop was by the fire station on the LHS. The Italian restaurant was previously the Enchanted Tearooms, a popular refreshment stop on Royal Blue excursions into the New Forest, run by the first wife of one of the Elliott Bros who owned Royal Blue until 1935.</i>

Time	Location and routing	Coaching history and information
1020	<p>Southampton</p> <p>A35 to Millbrook flyover</p> <p>A3024 (then Paynes Road, Waterloo Road, Shirley Road, Commercial Road)</p> <p>Follow diversion*¹ (Havelock Road then Civic Centre Road*², New Road to Six Dial jn*³)</p> <p>A3024 over Northam Bridge and on to Windhover rbt</p> <p>A27</p>	<p><i>*¹ Major roadworks have closed several roads to traffic to it is not possible to follow the original route to the coach station in Bedford Place and then into Devonshire Road</i></p> <p><i>*² The building on RHS mark Marlands Centre stands on the site of the former Hants & Dorset bus station)</i></p> <p><i>*³ This point regains the original route</i></p>
1105	<p>Fareham</p> <p>A27 under railway and ahead into town (West Street, Trinity Street, Osborn Road, Hartland Road*¹, Quay Street, East Street to Delme rbt)</p> <p>A27 to Portsbridge rbt*²</p> <p>A27 to Farlington rbt (<i>anticipating A3 road closure</i>)</p> <p>A2030 (n and e)</p> <p>B2177</p>	<p><i>*¹ The bus station on LHS is approximately the site of the former Hants & Dorset garage where the Royal Blue coaches called</i></p> <p><i>*² Just south of the A27 between the two footbridges in Hillsea was Southdown's coach station used by this service as a refreshment and interchange point – the loop is a bit tight for our coaches with congested modern traffic.</i></p>
1135	<p>Havant</p> <p>West Street, Park Road North, Elm Lane, Market Parade, North Street, East Street, Emsworth Road</p> <p>A259 through Emsworth, Bosham, Fishbourne</p> <p>A27 to Stockbridge rbt</p>	
1200	<p>Chichester</p> <p>Stockbridge Road, Canal Wharf, Basin Road*¹, Southgate onto A286*²</p> <p>A285 to Portfield rbt</p> <p>A27 to Fontwell rbt</p> <p>A29 to Whiteways Lodge rbt</p> <p>B2139 through Houghton</p>	<p><i>*¹ The bus station was where the Royal Blue service called</i></p> <p><i>*² In the early 1950s the Royal Blue route ran south of St Pancras along Oving Road from the gyratory to the Chichester bypass – this residential road with a sharp turn and bollard by the police station plus lines of parked cars make this unwise for large vehicles.</i></p>
1240-1355	<p>Amberley Museum</p> <p>B2139 to Whiteways Lodge rbt</p> <p>A264 to rbt</p>	
1415	<p>Arundel</p> <p>Maltravers Street*¹, High Street, The Causeway</p> <p>A27 to Durrington</p> <p>A24</p>	<p><i>*¹ Where the Royal Blue coach stop was</i></p>

Time	Location and routing	Coaching history and information
1445	Worthing A259 (Richmond Road) Heene Road, Marine Parade to the Pier*1, The Steyne A259 (The Broadway) through Lancing, Shoreham, Portslade, Hove	<i>*1 The coach station was on the LHS here in Library place (just beyond the Dome Cinema) and now part of the Stagecoach depot</i>
1505	Shoreham A259 through Portslade, Hove	
1535	Brighton A259 Kings Way, Kings Road and Grand Junction Road to Pier, up slope*1 to Marine Parade A259 passing Rottingdean*2, Saltdean and Peacehaven	<i>*1 The coach station was situated between two roads to the left near the bottom of this slope, but it is not possible to follow that route now</i> <i>*2 The large imposing light stone coloured buildings on the top of the hill on LHS are Roedean School. The Blind Veterans Home (formerly St Dunstons) are then on the LHS</i>
1600	Newhaven A259 (Brighton Road and over swing bridge)	

Day 2 end

1600	Newhaven A259 through Seaford, South Downs Country Park and East Dean	
1640	Eastbourne A259 Grove Road, Meads Road, Silverdale Road B2103 Grand Parade to Pier and depart	

Day 3 start

0800	Newhaven A259 through Seaford, South Downs Country Park and East Dean	
0840	Eastbourne A259 Grove Road, Meads Road, Silverdale Road B2103 Grand Parade to Pier and assemble	

Day 3, 23 June – EASTBOURNE – BASINGSTOKE - NEWBURY

Time	Location and routing	Coaching history and information
0835-0850	<p>Eastbourne (Coach bays along sea front to either side of pier on B2103 facing East and B2106 facing West)</p> <p>Cavendish Place*¹, Upper Avenue</p> <p>A2021 (n)</p> <p>A2270</p> <p>A27 (w) *²</p> <p>A27 to Southerham rbt</p> <p>A26 (through Cuilfail tunnel) to rbt*³</p>	<p><i>*¹ The exit from the coach station for Royal Blue, Associated Motorways and Southdown services was on the LHS – now Shackleton Close</i></p> <p><i>*² ~2 miles from A27 jn, the Long Man of Wilmington, a chalk figure of a man holding two poles carved into the hill, may look like an Iron Age monument but ‘only’ dates from the late 16th / early 17th century</i></p> <p><i>*³ the original route was aligned to the left from the 30mph signs but this is no longer accessible</i></p>
0930	<p>Lewes</p> <p>A2029 Malling Street and into one-way system*¹ and High Street</p> <p>A277</p> <p>A27 dual carriageway</p> <p>A270 (onto Grand Parade and Old Steine*²)</p>	<p><i>*¹ Hoardings on RHS surround recently closed bus station where the coach stop had been</i></p> <p><i>*² The Steine Street coach station no longer exists and the one-way system etc prevent getting closer to the site</i></p>
1000	<p>Brighton</p> <p>Pier roundabout</p> <p>A259 through Shoreham and Lancing</p>	
1030	<p>Worthing</p> <p>Steyne Gardens, Marine Parade*¹, West Parade</p> <p>West Parade Coach Parking</p>	<p><i>*¹ The coach station was in Library Place – now part of the Stagecoach depot on RHS immediately before the Dome Cinema</i></p>
1035-1105	<p>Marine Gardens Café (West Parade coach parking)</p> <p>George V Avenue</p> <p>A259 (e) to central Worthing</p> <p>A24 (n)</p> <p>Into Ashington - London Road to Billingshurst Road rbt*¹</p> <p>A24</p> <p>Into Dial Post - Worthing Road</p> <p>A24</p> <p>Into Southwater - Mill Straight and Worthing Road to A24 jn</p> <p>B2237</p>	<p><i>*¹ The original alignment ahead here is now a no through road</i></p>

Time	Location and routing	Coaching history and information
1155	<p>Horsham</p> <p>Worthing Road past bus station, Black Horse Way, Carfax*1, South Street</p> <p>A281 Albion Way, Bishopric to Farthings Hill Interchange</p>	<p><i>*1 Where the coach called at the Southdown office - the original route from here was along West Street, which has been pedestrianised</i></p>
1205	<p>Broadbridge Heath</p> <p>Old Guildford Road*1, Billingshurst Road</p> <p>A281 through Strood Green, Alfold Crossways*2, Palmers Cross, Bramley</p>	<p><i>*1 The original route continued on Old Guildford Road, forking right just beyond the Shelley Arms public house, but this is no longer a through road</i></p> <p><i>*2 The great-grandfather of Thomas Elliott who founded Royal Blue was the owner of a large farm at Loxwood, about 2 miles south of here</i></p>
1240	<p>Guildford</p> <p>Millbrook to gyratory*1</p> <p>A322 Bridge Street Onslow Street*2, Woodbridge Road*3</p> <p>A25 Guildford bypass*4 to rbt*5 to join A3</p> <p>A3</p> <p>A31 Hog's Back</p>	<p><i>*1 The former Farnham Road bus station was situated on the land to the right here</i></p> <p><i>*2 The large brick Rodborough Buildings on the RHS at this turn were the original (early 20th century) Dennis Factory</i></p> <p><i>*3 The Royal Blue coach stop was close to the present Methodist church</i></p> <p><i>*4 The area to the left by the TL was a large Aldershot & District garage and a further stop for Royal Blue coaches</i></p> <p><i>*5 The later Dennis Bros works used to occupy most of the land on the LHS beyond this rbt</i></p>
1310	<p>Farnham</p> <p>A325 Guildford Road, East Street into one-way system, Dogflud Way, East Street, South Street, Union Road, Downing Street, The Borough*1</p> <p>A287 Castle Street</p> <p>A287 to rbt for Odiham</p>	<p><i>*1 The original route cannot be followed through Farnham due to the 1970s' one-way system</i></p>
1340	<p>Odiham</p> <p>High Street</p> <p>B3349 over canal to rbt</p> <p>A287 to TL</p> <p>A30 to Black Dam rbt</p>	

Time	Location and routing	Coaching history and information
1350	<p>Basingstoke</p> <p>A30 Ringway South then to Eastrop via London Road, New Road, Victoria Street*1, New Street, Timberlake Road to Victory rbt</p> <p>A3010 Churchill Way West dual carriageway to rbt B3400 to West Ham rbt, round and into Leisure Centre</p>	<p><i>*1 Where Royal Blue coaches called at the Venture Transport bus garage in the 1930s</i></p>
1355	Milestones Museum	

Optional

1525	<p>Milestones Museum</p> <p>Churchill Way West back to Victory rbt</p> <p>Alencon Link, Chapel Hill, Kingsclere Road to rbt, Aldermaston Rd S</p> <p>A339 Ringway</p> <p>Into Kinsclere – Basingstoke Rd, George St, Newbury Rd</p> <p>A339</p>	
1600	<p>Newbury</p> <p>Newtown Road, Bartholomew Street, Market Street, Cheap Street, Bear Lane Wharf Road</p>	
1605	Newbury Wharf Bus Station	