

TRAVEL BACK IN TIME – A WEEKEND 'ON THE BUSES'

NEXT WEEKEND 20th / 21st SEPTEMBER

SATURDAY - KINGSBRIDGE VINTAGE BUS RUNNING DAY

SUNDAY – WESTPOINT RALLY, EXETER

The West County Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust (WHOTT) is organising two events this coming weekend, a 'Vintage Bus Running Day' based in Kingsbridge on Saturday 20 September and our 'Best in the West' Rally at the Devon County Showground at Westpoint one mile east of the M5 Junction 30 near Exeter. Both events will start at 10.00 and end at 16.30.

On Saturday some 20 vintage buses and coaches, ranging from a traditional pre-war single decker to a 1980s minibus, will operate services on routes radiating from the Bus Station to coastal villages on both sides of the Kingsbridge Estuary (Bantham, Thurlestone, Hope, South Pool, East Portlemouth and Salcombe) and to Slapton, Beesands, Loddiswell and East Allington. Travel on the old buses will be free.

The vehicles are provided from the WHOTT collection and by individual owners who have lovingly restored them to their former glory and who are making them available for the event at their own cost.

Some of the routes that will be travelled date back to the earliest days of motor buses where services in the South Hams were started by the Great Western Railway both for local travel and as feeders to the branchline from Kingsbridge to the main line at Brent.

The history of the routes and of local bus proprietors who set up, sometimes in competition with the GWR, is described in a lavishly illustrated souvenir programme which will be on sale in Kingsbridge Bus Station for £4. The programme will also contain detailed timetables for all the services, descriptions of all the buses expected to attend and the duties to be carried out by each vehicle during the day. Sales of the programme will help to defray WHOTT's costs in organising the event and support WHOTT's charitable objectives of bringing bygone transport to the public.

A special feature of this event will be the use of small country buses designed to safely negotiate the narrow lanes of the South Hams. From the comfort of a seat on the bus passengers will be able to enjoy spectacular views of the coast and countryside and travel at the leisurely pace of days past. All passengers will also receive an authentic ticket for their journey.

WHOTT Chairman, Colin Billington, who has a home near Loddiswell where he keeps his collection of vintage buses, commented "We will have been seen out and about recently trying all the routes planned for the running day. WHOTT organises events like this all over the South West but I can truthfully say that these routes around Kingsbridge provide

an unmatched combination of coastal and country scenery and spectacular views over the Kingsbridge Estuary. I hope that the event will be well supported by local people, visitors and enthusiasts. We are grateful for the backing and sponsorship of all three principal bus operators in the area, First, Stagecoach and of course Kingsbridge's own Tally Ho".

On Sunday WHOTT is organising its 6th 'Best in the West' Vintage Bus Coach & Lorry Rally at the Westpoint Showground near Exeter which is sponsored by both Stagecoach Devon and First Devon & Cornwall. We already have a record entry of over 100 vehicles and more are expected to enter at the last minute and arrive on the day. This year we have a much larger turnout of lorries, vans, fire engines and military vehicles and will also be featuring small country buses many of which are visiting for the Kingsbridge event and will be sure to appeal to visitors, no matter what their age, who enjoy and appreciate historic road transport vehicles.

As well as the vehicle displays, there will also be opportunity to sample free historic bus rides around the extensive roadway systems at the Westpoint site. A free bus service using vintage buses will operate on a 10 minute frequency between Westpoint and Exeter Bus Station. In addition there will be a large number of displays and sales stands relating to historic road transport. On site catering and toilets will be provided. The rally starts at 10.00 and closes at 16.00 hours and there is an admission charge of £5 which includes a free event programme detailing all the vehicles on display and featuring WHOTT's new road transport archive based near Plymouth Airport.

For those visitors arriving by car, please follow the Westpoint road signs to the site entrance and then follow the special 'Rally Car Park' signs to take you to the specially allocated area adjacent to the rally site.

Also available at both events will be **WHOTT's new book 'West Country Lightweight Single Decks – A Pictorial Tribute'** which has 96 previously unpublished full colour pictures of Bristol SU, LH and Albion Nimbus models over the period 1959 to 2002. These vehicles were particularly associated with the West Country with the Western & Southern National companies have by far the largest fleets of both Bristol types. The period illustrated was very colourful with nationalisation, denationalisation and changes of ownership causing a ever changing array of liveries and evolution of routes on which they operated. This book is available for £8 at the events or for £9.50 including postage & packing from WHOTT, Ledger Farm, Forest Green Road, Fifield, Maidenhead, SL6 2NR.

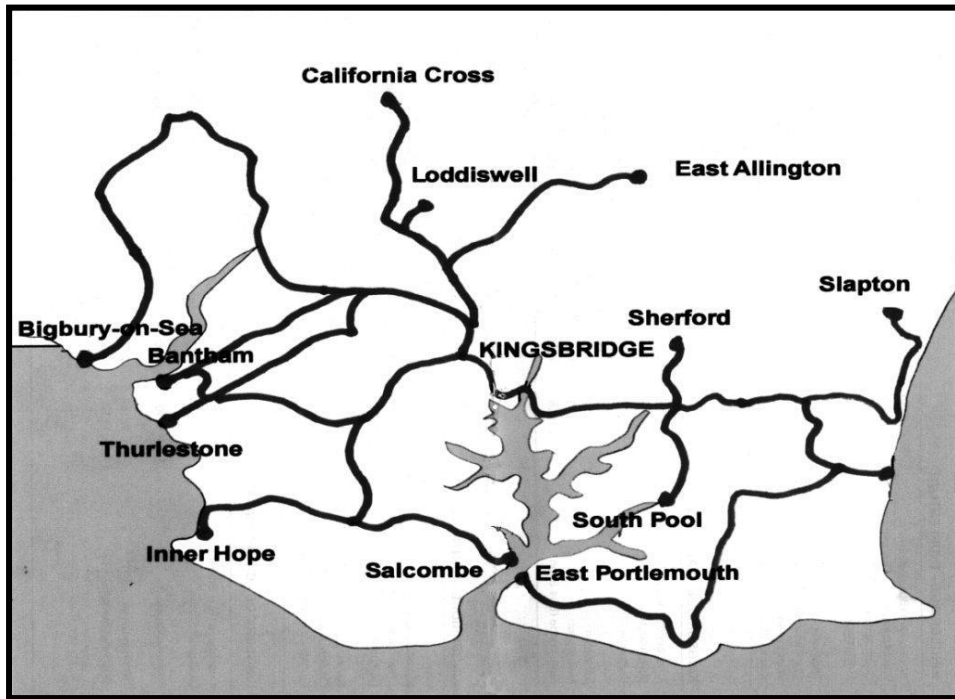
For those unable to come to the weekend events, the Kingsbridge programme which includes 28 historic pictures of Kingsbridge and district road buses from 1909 to the present day will be available after the weekend from the same address for £5.50 inc. p&p. The book and both illustrated programmes are available for an inclusive price of £15.

Further details from: Colin Billington, Chairman of The West Country Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust, Tel: 07990 505373, Email: chairman@busmuseum.org.uk

Relating to the Kingsbridge event:



Colin Billington's former Western National Bristol SUS at the East Portlemouth terminus of Route 110 high above the Kingsbridge Estuary with Salcombe in the background, taken earlier this year when exploring routes for the running day.



A map showing all the routes to be operated at the Kingsbridge Vintage Bus Running Day.



A Western National Bristol SUL coach exploring routes for the running day heads up from the beach on its way back to Kingsbridge. The 161 route went via Thurlestone and Buckland in the early '90s.



A Western National Bristol LWL of 1951 leads along the A379 towards Dartmouth with a queue of holiday and local traffic behind – nothing new here! Sister vehicle 1613 is preserved by the Trust and will be on static display in the bus station.

Relating to the Westpoint Rally:



A line-up of some of the coaches, vintage and modern, which attended last year's event



A 1939 Bristol L single deck which operated in the Plymouth and South Devon area and is now preserved by the 333 Group will attend both events over the weekend. At the end of its operational life this bus was used as a driver's rest room at Launceston so the restoration which took many years had to reinstate the interior as well as extensive bodywork and mechanical repairs.

Further information

The Trust

The West Country Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust (WHOTT) is a charitable company (Registered Charity No. 1079795, Company registered in England No. 3780463) established to preserve the history of commercial road transport for the education and enjoyment of future generations. WHOTT's ambitions are to build a permanent display hall with archive and vehicle restoration facilities. WHOTT's extensive archives on West Country road passenger and goods transport have recently been moved to much enhanced premises in Plymouth. Friends of the Trust receive newsletters with historic articles and get involved in restoring and running the vehicles and working with the very extensive archive collection. An annual rally takes place in September at Westpoint, the Devon County Showground on the outskirts of Exeter, and has attracted a large entry of buses, coaches, commercial vehicles and all forms of transport. This year the event will be on 21 September, the day after the Kingsbridge event. For further details see www.busmuseum.org.uk, in general, and the 'events' area, in particular. To become involved in WHOTT activities become a Friend of the Trust for a suggested minimum donation of £19 per year and receive our quarterly newsletter, WHOTT's News! which includes historic articles about West Country transport – see our website or send your donation to WHOTT, c/o 7 Temeraire Road, Manadon Park, Plymouth, PL5 3UA.