

## **Southern National book launches Dorchester bus rally**

Sunday 13th August 2017 – 10am-4pm – Dorchester, Top o' Town car park – 3rd annual running day – West Country Historic Omnibus and Transport Trust (WHOTT).

A new book on the history of Southern & Western National bus depots is to be launched in Dorchester on Sunday 13th August. It is compiled by Robert Crawley, chairman of the West Country Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust (WHOTT) which is organising its third annual bus rally at Top O' Town car park from 10am to 4pm. Vehicles from the former Southern & Western National companies will be present, together with representative vehicles from other local companies and their successors First and Go-Ahead, plus some historic local commercial vehicles.

Thirty buses will operate 75 departures on 15 routes from Top O' Town between 09.20 and 17.30. In addition, early morning feeder buses will bring enthusiasts and the public in from adjacent towns. Previous years' routes have been expanded to include a regular service to and from Weymouth for those who want to visit the beach and shops – or to escape from them!

A first this year will be a link with the Hardy Society which is celebrating the 130th anniversary of his book *The Woodlanders*. A free coach tour of sites associated with the book will take place in the afternoon with an on-board running commentary given by a local Hardy expert.

Chairman of WHOTT, Robert Crawley, said "We're delighted to have the support of local bus operators Go-Ahead and Damory who will be displaying some of their more modern vehicles. In addition, we shall be running classic buses and coaches on some historic local bus routes to delightful double-barrelled Dorset destinations. All services will be completely free, so we expect heavy demand – please come early!"

WHOTT will have its mobile museum bus on site showing an exhibition of local memorabilia, and a stand selling books, photographs and transport ephemera. The author will be on hand to sign copies of his book. A souvenir programme describing the routes operated and a summary of local transport history will be on sale on the day.

### **Notes to Editors**

WHOTT was formed in 1998 to establish a museum devoted to the history and development of public and commercial road transport in the West Country. It became a charitable trust in 2000 and now has eighteen vehicles in its care, covering the period from 1929 to 1998, including traditional half-cab single and double-deck buses, luxury coaches, minibuses and commercial vehicles. It also has a growing archive facility that can be visited by appointment.

From 2003 to 2014 the Trust organised an annual transport rally in Exeter but moved to Dorchester in 2015 and has grown every year since.

Free parking in Dorchester on Sundays. The rally site has a café and toilets and is a ten minute walk from the two railway stations. Direct trains from London and Bristol.

Top o' Town car park is the site of the former Bere Regis & District headquarters, bus garage and main works.

Morning services from the main centres to Dorchester depart as follows: from Bere Regis at 09.00, 11.30 and 13.15, from Blandford at 08.45 and 09.45, from Bridport at 09.00, from Sherborne at 09.00 and from Weymouth at 09.00, 10.00, 11.00 and 12.00. For routes and pickup times at intermediate points please see our website or call Robert Crawley as below.

Anyone who shares the aims of WHOTT is invited to become a member. Further details can be found on our website [www.busmuseum.org.uk](http://www.busmuseum.org.uk), facebook @WHOTTbusmuseum or from our chairman Robert Crawley, telephone 01395-567795, mobile 07974-567756, or from the sales stand on the day.