

DEVON GENERAL SOCIETY

A DAY AROUND DARTMOOR

Sunday 15th June 2025



1957 AEC Reliance SR 798

Welcome to our 2025 Members' tour, a day around Dartmoor, over former Devon General routes 19, 16 and 9, visiting Moretonhampstead, Chagford and Okehampton.

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We leave Exeter on **route 19**.

Devon General started on the route in June 1924, running from Exeter to Moretonhampstead and Chagford, taking over from the Devon Motor Company following a territorial agreement. By the 1950s there were five or six return journeys, although not all were through - on some trips Chagford passengers had a connecting change to or from route 16 at Moretonhampstead. The route was worked by Moretonhampstead garage, by the 1950s using single-deck SR-type AEC Regals - one day in 1956 by AEC Regals SR 519 and SR 525. Additionally, there were a couple of journeys morning and late afternoon worked by Exeter from there to Dunsford and back. One-man-operation came in the late-1950s, when a couple of AEC Reliances were working on the service.

Our route leaving Exeter takes us towards Dartmoor, passing through Longdown and Farrants Hill. For part of the route as far as Farrants Hill we are paralleled by route 19A which ran between Exeter and Christow. We descend into Teign valley before reaching Dunsford, then climb steadily through Doccombe before a winding descent into Moretonhampstead.

We arrive at **Moretonhampstead**, where we will take a short break. Devon General opened their garage in Court Street in 1931,



and it was in use for just over 40 years. The garage was most recently a motor museum, but it closed last year and the site is for sale. It is one of the only two remaining former Devon General garages, the other is at Tiverton.

Services worked from Moretonhampstead included the 16 (see next page), 23 to Princetown, 29 to Exeter via Drewsteignton, 78 Drewsteignton to Newton Abbot (renumbered 22 in 1959), and the 79 to North Bovey.

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For the next leg of our journey we follow **route 16**, which has a varied history.

In 1923, Devon General began operations between Torquay, Newton Abbot and Bovey Tracey as service 17, and Okehampton was reached the following year. Numbers 16, 17 and 18 were used on the route over the years from 1928, but by 1939 all services between Torquay and Okehampton were numbered 16, and following outbreak of war the route lost its Torquay section, and became Newton Abbot to Okehampton.

By the mid-1950s route 16 was double-decked, and worked by Kingsteignton (2 buses), Moretonhampstead (1) and Okehampton (1), with a mixture of Roe-bodied Guy Arabs and Utility AEC Regents. The service was generally 2 buses per hour from Newton Abbot to Bovey Tracey, with 8 continuing to Moretonhampstead or Chagford, and 4 of these through to Okehampton. There was also a Saturday morning journey Moretonhampstead to Okehampton, returning in the afternoon.

We take a break at **Chagford**. There are a few tea/coffee shops in this small market town.

We continue on route 16 to **Okehampton**, and turn off to the **railway station**. The station is restored with a Southern Railway theme; it is served by an hourly train service to Exeter and a number of connecting bus services. The Bulleid Buffet is located on platform 3, and the station contains items of railway heritage interest.



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Our way back to Exeter is by **route 6**.

It was started in 1923, from Exeter to Okehampton, initially in competition with Devon Motor Transport. From 1942 a bus was outstationed at Crockernwell, but this was discontinued in 1957, and the bus was kept overnight at Okehampton. Double-decker buses were introduced in 1951.

In the 1950s the route was worked using a variety of buses: AEC Regents, Guys and single-deck AEC Regals - on a day in 1954 by AEC Regent DR202 from Crockernwell, and Short-bodied Leyland DR224 and AEC Regal SR538 from Exeter.

By 1958 there were 6 or 7 return trips, with additional short workings between Okehampton and Sticklepath, also Exeter and Crockernwell. On Saturdays there were additional shopping trips between Okehampton and South Tawton; these were worked by Moretonhampstead, with the bus coming in on route 16, and returning home as a 16 in the late afternoon. The 6 was converted to one-man-operation in 1961.

Our route takes us along the old A30, through Sticklepath, Whiddon Down (where the 16 to Newton Abbot turns off), Crockernwell and Tedburn St. Mary. We descend the steady Five Mile Hill, pass Traveller's Rest, and return into Exeter through Crossmead and St. Thomas.

The timings for our day out are shown below. Please note these are estimated times, and we cannot guarantee to maintain them.

Sowton	1020	pick up at Belgrave Road 1030,
Park & Ride		Exeter St. Davids Station 1040
Moretonhampstead	1140	Depart 1200
Chagford	1220	Depart 1300
Okehampton Stn.	1400	Late lunch stop, depart 1520
Exeter	1630	set down at morning pick-up points

Please remember that the bus in which you are travelling is old and privately preserved. We ask you to treat it with respect, both inside and out, to help keep it tidy and to take your litter home.

We hope you enjoy the day out.