

DEVON GENERAL SOCIETY

AN EAST DEVON TOUR

Sunday 14th June 2026



1957 AEC Reliance SR 798
kindly supplied by the Devon General Omnibus Trust

Welcome to our 2026 Members' tour, an East Devon tour, over former Devon General routes 4, 52, 48 and 9, visiting Ottery St. Mary, Honiton, the Seaton Tramway and Sidmouth.

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We leave Exeter on **route 4**.

Devon General started the route in August 1921, running between Exeter and Honiton via Ottery St. Mary. The following year, it was extended to Axminster, and through the 1920s buses were kept overnight at Honiton and Axminster. From 1930, some journeys were diverted via Marsh Green and West Hill. Double-deckers were on the route by 1949.

By the 1950s, route 38 journeys to/from Tipton St. John were added to the 4 timetable, together with Exeter Airport trips, and the four trips between Ottery and Fairmile (these worked by the bus off the Sidmouth-Ottery service), although none were given separate route numbers!

At that time, the main route was running approximately hourly, although not all the way, with many journeys terminating at Ottery St. Mary or Honiton. On a sample day in 1954 the route was worked by AEC Regents and a lowbridge Leyland PD2: DR327 (RT-type, outstationed at Axminster), pre-war DR207 and DL640 (Ottery outstation) and DR214 from Exeter.

We follow the old A30 road, past Hand and Pen, and then a long straight descent into **Ottery St. Mary** for a brief photo-stop. Then we continue on to **Honiton** for a short break.

We climb out of Honiton on the A35, with some good views all round, following the Exeter to Seaton **route 52**, through Wilmington and passing the closed Seaton Junction station. This service began in September 1930 as Limited Stop route 48. It was renumbered 52 from 1st April 1939, but was withdrawn 5½ months later at the start of the war. The service recommenced in 1949, running three trips daily in the summer, but only Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays in the winter. It was withdrawn in 1962.



DL643 at Marine Place, Seaton

DEVON GENERAL SOCIETY

We arrive at the **Colyton** terminus of the Seaton Tramway for a lunch break.



Here, at the former railway station (closed 7th March 1966), there are places to sit, and also the Tramstop Cafe. The tramway moved from Eastbourne and opened at Seaton in 1970. Today, the line is an almost 3-mile ride via Colyford, Wetlands and Riverside, providing a useful service and giving excellent views of the Axe estuary.

From Colyton, the bus will continue via Colyford to **Seaton**, where we will meet those of you who have chosen to ride on the ½-hour trip tram there.

Our way back to Exeter begins over **route 48**.

This route has a varied history. Buses commenced in June 1929 as route 38, running Limited Stop between Torquay and Charmouth, via Exeter, Sidmouth, Seaton and Lyme Regis. In June 1930, a service 43 started from Exeter to Lyme Regis, but by that Autumn, both services 38 and 43 were combined as a 46, running from Torquay to Lyme Regis. More change came in 1939, when the 46 was cut back to run as an Express from Torquay to Exeter, and a new 48 introduced between Sidmouth, Seaton and Lyme Regis. This 48 was worked by Sidmouth depot, in the 1950s running four trips daily in summer, and three days a week in winter, using SR type AEC Regals.

This part of our tour is over Seaton Down and along the main road. Southern National also ran between Lyme Regis and Sidmouth, but their service 45 ran via Beer. We drop down into Sidford, before turning south and arriving at **Sidmouth Triangle**.

DEVON GENERAL SOCIETY

The final leg of our journey is over **route 9**.

DG started this service in July 1921, and opened a garage at Sidmouth in 1930, extended over vacant land in stages between 1939 and 1942. From 1935, buses interworked with the Sidmouth-Sidbury route 9A, which was renumbered 77 in 1939. Double-deck buses began in 1951, and by the late 1950s the whole route was worked from Sidmouth depot by some of the 1954 batch of AEC Regent 111s, and with concealed radiators were nicknamed 'fire engines'.



We leave Sidmouth, passing the site of the DG garage in Woolbrook. Then, following the A3052, descending into the Otter valley at Newton Poppleford, we return to Exeter passing Halfway House and Clyst St. Mary.

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

Exeter St. Davids Stn.	1045	pick up at Belgrave Road, Sowton P&R
Honiton	1215	Cafe break, depart 1250
Colyton	1330	Lunch stop, depart 1430
Seaton	1500	
Exeter	1650	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.