



Bus Station Merrywalks Stroud GL5 1QA
Telephone Stroud (04536) 3421

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CAROL BUS LAUNCH

The famous Stroud Carol Bus now in its 20th year will be launched on its 1989 tour of town and villages throughout South Gloucestershire by H.R.H. Princess Michael of Kent.

The areas covered include Dursley, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Tetbury, Stonehouse and Stroud.

Her Royal Highness has also kindly agreed to not only launch the Carol Bus from outside of the Stroud Subscription Rooms, Stroud at 5 pm on Friday 24th November, but she will also hand over a cheque for £4,000.00 on behalf of the Carol Bus Committee to Ms Rennie Fritchie Chair of Gloucestershire Health Authority. This money was donated to the Stroud and Cirencester Group of Hospitals, being their share of the £7,000.00 raised by the Carol Bus last year.

This year the Stroud Carol Bus is being decorated in festive theme by the employees of Stroud Valleys Buses. The art work, all of which is done on a voluntary basis is of excellent quality and done to the highest standard.

Over the past 20 years our collections have raised some £112000.00.

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The bus is equipped with its own generator and lit by many different coloured bulbs.

An electric organ is also provided. The choirs normally come from local churches and are carried on the top deck. On the night of the launch we are blessed with having the Reverend Colin Evans and his Rodborough Tabernacle choir to sing carols.

The bus is manned and driven by volunteers from Stroud Valleys Buses so every penny collected during the Carol Bus Tour goes straight to charity as the running costs are covered by the result of a raffle.

This year the main sponsors of the raffle are Pathfinder Tours, and local traders donate additional prizes. In previous years the main sponsor has been the Stroud & Swindon Building Society. The main beneficiaries this year will again be the local hospitals.

Fuel to run the bus will once more be donated by the Chairman and Directors of the Cheltenham & Gloucester Omnibus Company Limited.

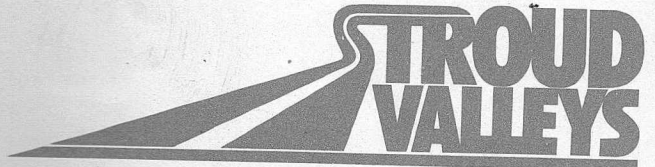
At approximately 5.30 pm after the launch the Carol Bus will, as in previous years, proceed to St. Roses Special School at Beeches Green. H.R.H. Princess Michael of Kent has kindly agreed to include this visit in her itinerary, much to the delight of Sister Quentin and her staff.

There will be no press facilities during the school visit but a photo call will be available when the Princess bids farewell at about 6 pm.

ENDS:

For further information please contact Harold Smith, Manager,
Stroud Valleys Buses on Stroud (0453) 757946.

28-11-89



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ROYAL LAUNCH FOR CAROL BUS

Princess Michael of Kent was in Stroud last night (Friday) to launch the famous Stroud Carol Bus on its 20th annual fund-raising tour of the towns and villages of South Gloucestershire.

In those 20 years, the Carol Bus, bedecked in multi-coloured lights and decorated each year in a festive theme by either staff of Stroud Valleys Buses or local school children, has raised £112,000 for equipment for Stroud area hospitals and other local charities.

Before the Princess officially launched the Carol Bus this year, from outside the Subscription Rooms, she was introduced to the hard-working volunteer members of the Carol Bus Committee, lead by chairman Harold Smith, who is also manager of Stroud Valleys Buses.

She also met all the 'behind the scenes' workers who help make this charity project such a success - staff from the bus company, their families and friends who volunteer each year to drive the double-decker bus, and collect money as they go.

This year, the bus has been decorated by a team from the bus company, and the standard of the illustrations has been judged among the best ever. The scenes were painted by bus company tyre fitter Michael Coleman and drivers Ian Frost, Stephen Yates, Mike Cook, Tony Gatley and Richard Lusty, Drivers Richard Noonan and Michael Ede were in charge of the electrical side - there are more than 300 coloured light bulbs decorating the bus.

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When she arrived at the Subscription Rooms, the Princess was welcomed by Mr Mark Thomas, Chairman of Western Travel Ltd, which owns Stroud Valleys Buses. His young son Edward, aged four, presented the Princess with a basket of dried flowers, made by Mrs Sue Chambers, wife of the bus company's district engineer, Steve Chambers.

The Princess was also introduced to Councillor Mrs Val Gardiner, Chairman of Stroud District Council; the Council's chief executive Mr Richard Ollin; Stroud MP Roger Knapman; Ms Rennie Fritchie, chair of Gloucester Health Authority and Mr Norrie Thomas, managing director of Cheltenham and Gloucester Omnibus Company.

Princess Michael then launched the Carol Bus and presented a cheque for £4,000 to Ms Fritchie on behalf of the Carol Bus Committee, the local hospitals' share of last year's collections.

Later the Princess attended a short reception in the Subscription Rooms where she met the sponsors of the raffle which pays the running costs of the Carol Bus to ensure that all money collected en route goes straight to charity - Pathfinder Tours and former sponsors the Stroud and Swindon Building Society.

Other guests included the President and Vice President of Stroud Chamber of Trade and David Brown, Managing Director of Hawker Siddeley which donated the generator which powers the Carol Bus lights.

Carols were sung by the Rodborough Tabernacle Choir.

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Before returning to her home at Nether Lypiatt, the Princess paid a short visit to St Roses Special School in Beeches Green, Stroud, the traditional first stop on the Carol Bus tour, where she met many of the school's 80 day and boarding pupils, aged from two to 18, who were enjoying a Christmas party, and looking forward to a visit from Father Christmas who arrived on board the Carol Bus.

The Carol Bus spends the month leading up to Christmas travelling round the South Gloucestershire area - including Stroud, Cirencester, Tetbury, Nailsworth, Stonehouse, Gloucester, Dursley and Cheltenham.

Fuel for the tour is donated by the Cheltenham and Gloucester Omnibus Company, which is the parent company of Stroud Valleys Buses. The overall holding company is Western Travel.

E N D S

For further information please contact Harold Smith, Manager of Stroud Valleys Buses on Stroud (0453) 757946

25th November 1989

Blow to carol bus bid

GALES were partly to blame for proceeds from Stroud bus company's carol bus tour falling just below the target figure.

The seasonally decorated double-decker, sent off by Princess Michael of Kent, collected £6,375, slightly less than last year's best ever total of £7,000.

Mr. Harold Smith, chairman of the

Stroud Valleys Buses Carol Bus Committee, blamed this year's shorter tour.

The carol bus was on the road for five fewer days than normal, he said and gales meant that journeys were curtailed on some occasions.

Mr. Smith said: "We are still more than pleased with the total raised. People were very generous."
