

End of road fears for town carol bus

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by Andy Read

GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S most popular double decker — the famous Stroud carol bus — may have reached the end of the road.

For the second Christmas running, the festive bus is being left in the depot owing to lack of volunteer manpower.

Last year was the first time in 25 years that the carol bus failed to make its traditional yuletide tours of the valleys around Stroud.

Manned by volunteers from Stroud Valleys Buses, the brightly decorated musical bus, illuminated by hundreds of coloured bulbs, carried carol singers all over the district, raising more than £150,000 for local charities during its quarter century.

Disappointing

Over the years, it had become an institution visiting housing estates from Wotton-under-Edge to Upton-St Leonards, from Hardwicke to Hillesley.

Stroud bus company manager Chris Blick said it was a tragedy the bus would not be on the road again this year.

"It is very sad and disappointing," he said. "I have been trying all year to get something organised but the support just has not been there and it has not happened.

"We still have a nucleus of people who are dedicated to the carol bus and would willingly turn out but there are just not enough of them," said Mr Blick.

IDEAL FOR GUESTS