

Malcolm Robinson

My interest in buses started as a child in the 1960's travelling on Leyland buses of Ribble and Liverpool Corporation and then the excitement of going on holiday by bus to North Wales. When my family moved to Suffolk in the 1970's my interest in buses continued and I still remember my first journey on a brand new Eastern Counties Leyland National. The image of the Leyland name and logo in the centre of the wheel hubs and steering wheels of various buses worked its magic and I developed a particular interest in Leyland and subsequently the broader British Leyland. As a student of business studies in my teens I wrote a project that included details of the Lightweight / Leyland Experimental Vehicle (LEV) offering a low cost rail vehicle alternative for rural areas, and later my dissertation at university covered the structure and operation of bus operators across the UK. My regular form of travel between university in Reading and home in Suffolk was by Leyland Leopards and latterly Tigers (of course!) bodied by Duple, ECW and Plaxton – the sound of Leyland coaches departing Victoria Coach Station en-masse on a Sunday night really was something else!

My career has been spent in Procurement, but it has nearly always been in engineering and manufacturing related businesses where I always took the opportunity to get into the design offices, stores and onto the shop floor where I learned a huge amount from great people. Businesses have included: Millars Wellpoint International - water pumps powered by Lister, Dorman and Hatz engines, and related equipment for the construction industry. FMC Corporation UK - agricultural machinery powered by Deutz engines, and food handling conveyors. Group Lotus – automotive engineering consultancy designing and developing engines, transmissions, ride and handling, interiors and even complete vehicles for clients around the world, and also building exciting cars themselves! In 2016 I moved into the defence sector working for UK Original Equipment Manufacturer businesses continuing the theme of my career of excellence in manufacturing in the UK, and I continue to work in this sector.

In my thirties I joined a bus preservation society where I served on the committee as an events organiser and then preservation officer working on buses and arranging MOTs. It is in this role where I became involved with Bristol L, MW, Lodekka and RE buses and this led on to my obtaining a full PCV licence and subsequent part-time in-service driving. Initially this was for Norfolk Green where I had the joy of driving the Leyland Nationals and Leyland Leopards that I had experienced in my younger years, and latterly I have been driving for Simonds.

First bus I ever drove? Drive a bus with us - Bristol Lodekka. Bus I took my test on? Ford R1114.
Best bus I've ever driven? Without a shadow of a doubt, Leyland Titan PD2.

It gives me a great 'buzz' to be a part of the Leyland Society and contribute to gathering and sharing the heritage of Leyland into the future.

Malcolm Robinson. July 2025.