

VEHICLE DETAILS

Chassis	:	Leyland National Mark 2 (NL116AL11/1R)
Chassis number	:	07648
Body type	:	Long with one door and no roof pod
Seating	:	B52F, 23 standing, 75 total
Original owner	:	Atomic Energy Authority, Harwell
Registration numbers	:	WBW735X (16 February 1982), 635GBU (1991 - 2010)

WHAT THE CODES MEAN

Chassis: NL116AL11/1R – NL (National), 116 (11.6 metre length), AL11 (Leyland AL11 engine), 1 (1 door), R (right hand drive).

Seating: B52F – B (single deck bus), 52 (seating capacity of bus), F (door position - front).

FIRST OWNER (1982 - 1991)

The Atomic Energy Authority in Harwell owned four virtually identical Leyland National 2 buses for staff transport.

JTF971W and JTF972W were bought new in April 1981 and in February 1982 WBW735X and WBW736X were added to the fleet.

They operated WBW735X until 1991 when, apparently, is suffered from engine failure.

Note the heated windscreen and the four vents down the nearside of the bus.



SECOND OWNER (1991 - 2010)

WBW735X was registered by Tom Tappin Limited (Tappins Coaches Limited from 2007) of Didcot on 18 June 1991 for use on a shuttle service from Reading to the Thames Valley (Industrial) Park.

At this time the registration number of the bus was changed to 653GBU and the original Leyland AL11 engine changed to a Leyland turbo B-series TL11 245bhp 'Tiger' engine.

The seats were reupholstered and advertising boards fitted to the sides of the bus.



THIRD OWNER (2010 - 2014)

Routemaster Buses Limited bought WBW735X, to which it had reverted, on 1 November 2010 and it was painted into their two-tone "London Country" livery in July 2011.

The bus was mainly used for school and other contract work, including rail replacement duties over a wide area.

By this time it had lost the heated windscreen, the rearmost pair of vents on the nearside and the advertising boards, although the rivets can still be seen on the sides of the bus.

It was withdrawn from service on 24 June 2014.



IN PRESERVATION (2014 - 2019)

WBW735X was officially purchased for preservation on 1 August 2014. It was driven from Crewe to Wigan that evening and then onward to the home of Taybus Vintage Vehicle Society in Arbroath the following day.

During its 32 years, four months and nine days of service work the bus only had three main owners and was never linked with a major operator making it quite a rare survivor.

It attended three rallies in Routemaster Buses livery after purchase followed by six months of hard work to prepare the bus for a full repaint.

To mark the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of Strathtay Scottish Omnibuses Limited WBW735X was brush painted into the second version of their livery (with white stripe) and returned to the road on 17 May 2015.



THE LEYLAND NATIONAL PROJECT

The Leyland National was a joint project between the National Bus Company and British Leyland with a plan to standardise on a single type of vehicle. A purpose-built factory was established at Workington and the vehicle incorporated many revolutionary concepts for the time. Nearly 8000 Nationals were built between 1972 and 1985 in many different guises. Deregulation in 1986 led to a considerable number of Nationals being disposed of from larger fleets but adopted by many of the new operators. In 1991 a refurbishment project called "Greenway" was launched where around 175 Nationals were rebuilt and re-engineered.

The Leyland National 2 was announced in 1978 and incorporated the best features of the original along with many new concepts. A new Leyland L11 engine was used and the cab modified to more closely resemble that of the Leyland Titan. The radiator was moved to the front giving it a more bulbous look and a curved windscreen fitted increasing the bus length slightly. The first production Leyland National 2 bus was delivered in January 1980. Later different engines could be specified - Leyland's turbo TL11 or O680 engines alongside Gardner's 6HLXB or 6HLXCT engines. Construction ceased in 1986 with just over 1200 buses being built during the six years it was in production.

In the 1980s Leyland National bus components were also used to build Pacer and BR Class 155/153 railbuses. Danish subsidiary Leyland-DAB built some underfloor-engined articulated buses with Leyland National bodywork.



THE LEYLAND NATIONAL AND STRATHTAY SCOTTISH

Strathtay Scottish Omnibuses Limited operated a fleet of 11 Leyland National 2 buses which they inherited from Northern Scottish and Midland Scottish.

Seven of the buses from Midland Scottish were of the long 11.6m variant with a single door and no roof pod:

- SN1: DMS20V;
- SN2: DMS21V;
- SN3: DMS22V;
- SN6: NLS986W;
- SN7: NLS987W;
- SN8: NLS988W;
- SN9: NLS989W.

Two of the buses from Northern Scottish were of the short 10.6m variant with a single door and no roof pod:

- SN4: GS07V/KRS541V;
- SN5: GS08V/KRS542V/PIL2755

The remaining two buses from Northern Scottish were of the short 10.6m variant with a single door and roof pod:

- SN10: MS09W;
- SN11: MS011W.

Only one Strathtay Scottish Leyland National is known to survive. Sadly SN9 NLS989W has been considerably altered by a kilt hire company and hasn't been in use for some considerable time making it a very expensive restoration project.



THIRTY YEARS ON

WBW735X closely resembles seven of the eleven Leyland National buses operated by Strathtay Scottish. To mark their thirtieth anniversary WBW735X was brush painted into the second version of their livery with slightly modified "Best Bus Around" branding and returned to the road in May 2015.

WBW735X was purchased for preservation in August 2014 from Routemaster Buses. It had previously been in service with Tappins Coaches and the Atomic Energy Authority.

During over 32 years of service work the bus has only had three main owners and has never been linked with a major operator making it quite a rare survivor.

