

'Bus Doctor' preservationist Roland Williams dies aged 48

The professional engineer behind some of the most thoroughly executed bus preservation projects of the past 15 years, **Roland Williams**, died on 7 March aged 48, three years after being diagnosed with an ultimately incurable brain tumour.

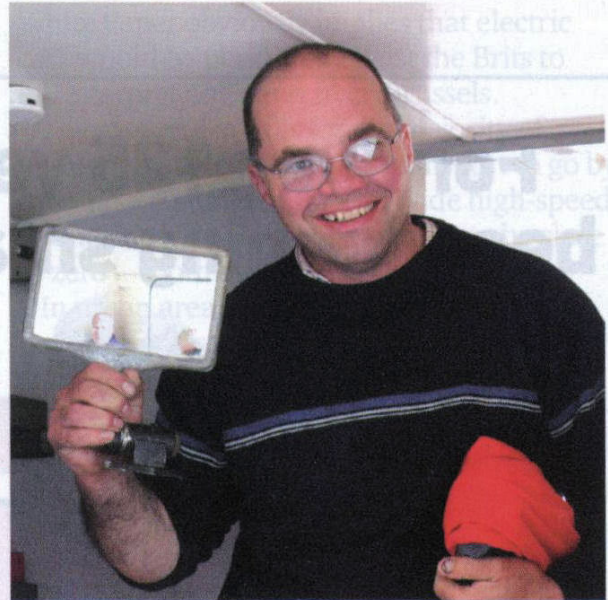
As resident engineer at the Scottish Vintage Bus Museum from 1996, he established a business called The Bus Doctors, derived from the nickname he attracted as a bus industry engineer for always wearing a pristine white coat and highly polished shoes. Working from one of the SVBM's buildings, he and others undertook everything from major rebuilds to routine pre-MoT checks.

Major projects included McGill's Guy Arab III GVD 47 (see p38), as well as some from much farther afield like Mike Walker's Bristol Omnibus Company 'Queen Mary' Bristol L6B coach NAE 3 and Julian Paterson's Eastern Counties Bristol VRTLL LFS 303F.

He revived and organised the museum's May running day from 2005, and with Dave Hoare's Chepstow Classic Buses took an active role in running shuttle bus services at such events as the Glastonbury music festival and Royal International Air Tattoo at Fairford, where he indulged his interests in aircraft watching as well as providing transport. All modes of transport fascinated him, as did hillwalking, canal boating and ballroom dancing.

Williams was born in Heswall, Cheshire in November 1962 and graduated in 1984 with an engineering degree from Liverpool University, where he was chairman and secretary of the public transport society and embarked on his first preservation project, the acquisition and restoration of Crosville Bristol SC4LK SSG668.

He spent one summer vacation as a technical engineering assistant with Crosville, then joined the Scottish Bus Group as technical assistant



Roland Williams demonstrating a rudimentary shaving mirror inside a Bristol VR used for drivers' accommodation at Glastonbury. CHARLES ROBERTS

at the Marine Works of Eastern Scottish in Edinburgh, remaining for 10 years, latterly as depot manager in Musselburgh. By then the company was part of the fast expanding GRT Bus Group and he moved to Norwich to become a fleet engineer with sister company Eastern Counties, but left after two years following an internal reorganisation.

'Roland was an engineer extraordinaire,' says the SVBM's Jasper Pettie. 'Never one to avoid getting his hands dirty, he was equally at home working on anything and everything from a 1920s Leyland G7 to a 2000s Dart SLF, and his breadth of knowledge and experience were exceptional. He never went anywhere without taking a toolbox just in case.'

He is survived by his partner, Jan, as well as his mother and sister.