

MEET THE COUNCIL: Your opportunity to get to know the people behind the BDoY competition

“Where are my sandwiches?”

An introduction to Tina Haynes, Company Secretary

Ed: Tina, welcome to ‘Meet the Council’, how long have you been involved with BDoY and what is your role?

TH: I first became involved with the UK Bus Driver of the Year competition when jointly organising the local competitions for First Manchester with Keith Fieldhouse, who is now the Director of Operations of BDoY, in charge of the course. I have been proud to serve as the Company Secretary since 2009

Ed: I believe your bus industry experience stretches back even further?

TH: It does, as young as I look! (Smile!) I have over 26 years of experience, including nine as a driver and eleven years working in the training department. The title ‘Company Secretary’ belies the fact that I know exactly what it takes to be a good bus driver in modern traffic conditions and I understand exactly how hard all of our competitors have worked to reach the BDoY final.

Ed: Is that still your day job?

TH: Not anymore, but I have spent the last

nine years in an equally fulfilling role in the NHS

Ed: Tell me what being the ‘Company Secretary’ of BDoY entails.

TH: In my role with BDoY, I am responsible for organising and attending meetings, managing official minutes, booking hotel rooms, and coordinating the gala dinner at the National Final in Blackpool, which welcomes more than 400 guests on the Saturday evening. You might think that after organising such a large event my work would be done, but far from it! I’m up again at 6am on the Sunday morning to help run and mark the theory test alongside my BDoY colleague, Paul Martin!

Ed: With so much commitment doesn’t your family miss you?

TH: They don’t get a chance to, they’re there too, helping to ensure the competition runs smoothly - signing drivers on, checking licences, and making sure the marshals are well fed on the Sunday. It truly has become a real family affair.

Ed: That has become a great theme of the BDoY Finals, family support, what a great example your family sets! What drives you to

continue with what you do?

TH: I continue to support BDoY because I believe it is one of the best ways to show our appreciation for the challenging and vital work our drivers undertake every single day. Seeing how proud the drivers are when they win at Blackpool gives me a real buzz. For me, it’s all about giving something back to the drivers. The annual competition in Blackpool feels like a family reunion—full of camaraderie, sportsmanship, and celebration. It is a wonderful weekend that honours the very best drivers in the country.

Ed: That’s a wonderful note on which to end. Thank you very much, Tina.



● Tina Haynes

And now for the awards!

As you open this page out you will find all the award winners in their very well-deserved moment of glory!



Presenting the trophies for the 2025 Final is John Sheehy, CEO of TBF, the Transport Benevolent Fund, who told Middle Walk Times how much he had enjoyed his day.

“It was my first time at the National Final of the Bus Driver of the Year. TBF is proud to be one of the sponsors, and as a charity we understand the impact the awards have on bus drivers and the industry at large. You could feel the buzz amongst the drivers on the day of the competition.

I enjoyed being a passenger on a couple of bus rides and take my hat off to all the drivers who performed well while under examination. And then they had the theory test...!

It was a pleasure for me to hand out the awards to all the winners and to see so many happy faces. I was also pleased to see that many of the drivers were already TBF members.

I want to thank Joe Mackie and his team for putting on a fantastic event; their hard work really paid off, enabling everyone to enjoy both days.

TBF looks forward to continuing its relationship with the BDOY and being a sponsor at next year’s event.”

John Sheehy
Chief Executive Officer



● And we enjoyed your company, John, thank you for all that TBF does for our people in the industry and for supporting UKBDoY - Joe

Congratulations ROSCO on 70 years of rewarding safe driving

The BDoY team was delighted to be joined for the weekend of the final by John Burch, Chairman of the Road Operators Safety Council, ROSCO, in their 70th anniversary year.



ROSCO was established in 1955 to promote safe driving amongst its members and has grown to be recognised as the UK’s leading organisation in this field.

“I have had an excellent weekend” enthused John, “It has been a pleasure to meet so many drivers who wear their ROSCO badges with pride. For 70 years we have worked hard to help develop a safety-first culture in the UK public transport sector, encouraging drivers to go above and beyond to keep passengers and road users safe, and we are very proud of all the drivers who succeed in winning their badges.”

John explained “At the end of every year drivers of member organisations who can demonstrate that they have had 12 months of consistent blame-free safe driving are awarded a certificate and a badge demonstrating their achievement. It is this strong incentive to earn their ROSCO badge which ensures concentration on driving safely every day.”

“ROSCO has been a long-time supporter of the UK Bus Driver of the Year awards, Championing Driving Excellence, and I am delighted to confirm that we will once again be supporting the competition in 2026!”

● Thank you, John, we have enjoyed your company and your support for our awards. Congratulations on your 70th anniversary and here’s to your next 70 years! - Joe



Blackpool 2025



● “Soul mates...”



● “Look – no hands!”



● “Mirror-mirror on the wall, who’s the best driver of us all?”



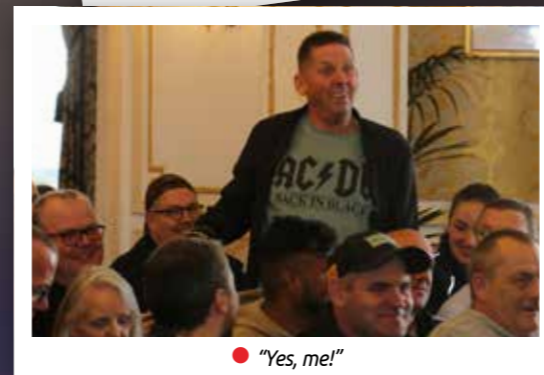
● “...spot on!”



● “We’ll just check-mate!”



● “Has anyone seen my glasses!”



● “Yes, me!”



● “...and 3 came along at once!”



● “How many double decker buses high?”



● “The night of the round tables!”



Middle Walk Times

A memento of UK Bus Driver of the Year 2025

Wow-Michael wins! And it’s a family affair

Driving his bus as close to perfection as possible and having almost encyclopaedic knowledge of the laws and rules which keep you safe were just two of the factors which made Sunday September 14th 2025 such a memorable day for First Bus North & West Yorkshire driver Michael Leech. Achieving his ambition of being crowned UK Bus Driver of the Year 2025 in front of his wife Karen and daughter Katie made it very special indeed as you will read in his reaction!

For the organising team, after another year of hard work behind the scenes it was very encouraging to see 100 finalists arrive on Saturday full of enthusiasm and anticipation, all that was needed was a good day for the competition!

On Saturday afternoon briefings were held for drivers and marshals and the beautifully turned-out buses, loaned by companies from around the UK, were checked out by drivers to see what they might be allocated...

Saturday’s Gala dinner was another excellent evening delivered by the Imperial Hotel staff and much enjoyed by competitors, families and guests, followed by an early night and as much sleep as possible!

Sunday 14th dawned chilly but dry, with a very early start for the team of invaluable marshals setting up the signing-on desk, the driving course, the theory test room and getting the buses to the start line. Every driver must pass a breathalyser test, pick up their start number and head to the temporary ‘Bus Depot’ at the top of Middle Walk - from which the first competitor set off at 8am...

Back at the Imperial Hotel the theory tests get under way and there is a real buzz to the whole day with results gathered, checked and double checked until finally everybody gathers at 4pm for the prize giving - with every emotion possible from elated anticipation, through quiet confidence, to some already planning to put things right for next year!

Prizes are presented in reverse order, so the excitement builds until that final announcement

“And the UK Bus Driver of the Year 2025 is...!”



● Michael’s winning Drive.



● Michael displays his trophies with help from his wife, Karen and daughter, Katie.

We caught up with Winner Michael Leech to ask what the win meant to him and his depot...

“Wow! This three-letter word perfectly sums up the 2025 BDoY competition for me.

After what I thought was a reasonable drive and theory test, fast forward to the presentation and the tension and excitement from all was obvious. When my fellow team finalist David Nairn was announced as 5th place overall and runner up for First Bus, there was much clapping and cheering!

After second place was announced, everyone with First Bus realised that the winner had to be one of them...

Then, when my name was read out they erupted! I was stunned for a second before I was elbowed from both sides to get up!

My wife Karen and daughter Katie joined me on stage for some pictures, which was handy as there was no way of carrying all

bus driver of the year
championing excellence since 1967

the trophies by myself!

Back at the depot there was a whirlwind of PR pictures for the company, interviews for radio, newspapers and industry publications, and a fantastic reception from everybody at work.

I spent some of the money on things for my first grandchild who is due to be born in March, and Karen insisted on some new carpets for the house (after a recent decorating accident!)

I would like to say a massive ‘thank you’ to everybody involved in BDoY, it has been an absolute privilege to be a part of all this”

Congratulations to Michael and all the winners and finalists in the 2025 UK Bus Driver of The Year competition and we hope to see you all back to try again next year.

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Runner up – 2nd Overall – Nick Perry, Go North East
To hear my name as a major trophy winner on just my second time competing was a surreal moment! 2nd overall, highest placed Go-Ahead competitor and competitor from a ROSCO registered company on their 70th anniversary was amazing! Go North East have celebrated with news releases to the local media and the Managing Director kindly sent me a letter of congratulations! The prize money will pay for our 2026 family holiday and maybe a treat for myself! I hope to return in 2026 and try for the top spot – the work has already begun!



3rd Overall – Maciej Herman, McGill's Bus Group



I entered the BDoY competition more out of curiosity and fun than in real expectation, but after doing well in the local rounds made it to Blackpool. Now finishing 3rd overall, highest placed McGill's competitor and highest placed competitor from a depot in Scotland is amazing! My family and my colleagues at McGill's have all been delighted and now expect me to do it again next year... The competition was great and very well organized. Thank you so much for this opportunity, I hope to see you in 2026!

4th Overall – Simon Vincent, Plymouth City Bus



It was an amazing feeling of shock and excitement when I realised that I had come 4th overall and 2nd highest place competitor from Go-Ahead. I don't think there was a dry eye from my Go South West team as a BDoY trophy hasn't come home to Cornwall for over 11 years! I even had a round of applause from my colleagues when I walked into the depot the next day. My family were proud of me too and we're hoping to have a short break away with the prize money. I'm looking forward to competing again next year!

5th Overall – David Nairn, First Bus North & West Yorkshire



As this was only my second year in the BDoY final my reaction to being announced as a top five finisher was shock and a bit overwhelming! My family (especially dog Daphne!) enjoyed the whole weekend, with the trophy and prize money a real bonus. I'll spend my winnings treating them at Christmas! As second highest place competitor in First Bus I send many congratulations to colleague Michael for winning overall, I very much hope to challenge again in 2026.

Quality AND Quantity!

● Joe Mackie.



That is what our customers expect from their local bus service every day and so I am delighted that our UK Bus Driver of the Year 2025 final emphatically demonstrated that both are alive and well in the industry!

The whole of our 2025 Blackpool weekend was an example of quality – The Imperial Hotel; the buses; the organisation; the standards of the competition; the Gala dinner; our guests; the prizes and of course the awards ceremony which rounded off the weekend.

And for quantity, 100 of the best bus drivers in the country, and a wide range of outstanding buses for them to drive.

My thanks begin with our competitors, without whom we would not have an event! It was extremely encouraging to see that over 60% of you were finalists for the first time. That bodes well for both the competition and for the standards of driving training around the UK. I hope you all enjoyed yourselves, perhaps learned something and will enter again in 2026.

It was a real pleasure to see family and friends supporting our finalists throughout the weekend. You were all very welcome and we hope to see you again.

Digitisation and Blind spot safety

The buses kindly provided for the tests were as good as we have ever had and included two of the latest electric versions. Hopefully some of you were able to experience them, perhaps for the first time. The electrification and digitisation of buses brings its own challenges. Camera mirrors can be a mixed blessing with screens always in the eyeline. The BDoY challenge reminds every driver how very important it is to continue to look from side to side, checking those blind spots all the time. The winners were very good at this!

A message from our Guest of Honour:

"I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the organisers of the Bus Driver of the Year competition for your outstanding hospitality. It was a pleasure to be part of such a wonderful celebration of excellence in public transport. We are especially grateful that you chose Blackpool for your event. It was an honour to welcome you, and we hope you enjoyed everything our Town has to offer. Thank you for all that you do to support and recognise the vital work of our bus drivers."

The Worshipful the Mayor of Blackpool, Councillor Kim Critchley.

Our Guests

Our guests this year included The Worshipful the Mayor of Blackpool Councillor Kim Critchley, John Burch, the new Chairman of one of our long-standing supporters ROSCO in this their 70th anniversary year, and presenting the awards John Sheehy, CEO of the Transport Benevolent Fund – an organisation which does such good work in supporting industry employees in need.

Again, I thank them all for their support both on the day and behind the scenes.

My special thanks, as ever, go to the whole team which make the UKBDoY Final the prestigious event it is. The Board which works tirelessly throughout the year organising it; the sponsors who support us and enable it to happen, the National Stewards whose wise counsel guides us in running a fair competition; the company managers who encourage and enable participation and the whole team of marshals, administrators and organisers on the day who have made the UK Bus Driver of the Year THE industry award to win!

Quality and quantity indeed! I sincerely thank each and every one of you very much and can't wait to see you all again at Blackpool in September 2026!

**Joe Mackie OBE
Chairman, UK Bus Driver of the Year Association**



All our winners from the 2025 UK Bus Driver of the Year competition...

Awards presented by John Sheehy, CEO of the Transport Benevolent Fund.

Runner-up: Nick Perry Go North East

- The BDoY Trophy and £1,500 sponsored by GreenRoad
- **Highest-placed Go-Ahead competitor**
- The Go-Ahead Trophy and £1,000
- **Highest-placed competitor from a company in membership of The Road Operators Safety Council**
- Glass award and £500

(winning a total of £3,000)



Third Place: Maciej Herman McGill's Bus Group

- The BDoY Trophy and £1,000
- **Highest-placed McGill's competitor**
- The Andy Ramsey Memorial Shield and £750
- **Highest-placed competitor from a depot in Scotland**
- The Joe Mackie Shield and £100

(winning a total of £1,850)



Bus Driver of the Year 2025: Michael Leech First Bus North & West Yorkshire

- The Coventry Trophy - donated by Coventry Road Accident Prevention Council
- The Road Operators Safety Council Award and £1,500
- The Unite Trophy and £1,500
- The BDoY Trophy
- The John Boxall Medallion - donated by the BDoY Council
- The winner also receives a mini-break in London, courtesy of TFL, which will include a visit to the capital's Surface Transport Control Centre
- **Highest-placed First Bus competitor**
- The FirstGroup Cup and £1,000
- **Highest-placed competitor from a depot in England**
- The Winstanley Shield and £100

(winning a total of £4,100)



● Michael Leech receives his trophies from John Sheehy, CEO of the Transport Benevolent Fund.



● All the winners from the 2025 competition.



Second highest-placed National Express competitor
● The National Express Trophy and £500
Christopher Godridge - West Midlands Travel



Second highest-placed London Buses competitor
● The London Buses Shield and £500
Michael Rowley Go-Ahead London



Highest-placed Stagecoach competitor
● The Stagecoach Trophy and £1,000
Aleksei Solovjov - Stagecoach East Scotland



Highest-placed National Express competitor
● The National Express Trophy and £1000
Lee Grantham - West Midlands Travel



Third highest-placed McGill's competitor
● The McGill's Second Runner-up Shield and £250
Michael Morrison - McGill's Bus Group



● The up to two year old category winner.

The Bryan Constable Award
Best-presented buses in use at the National Final

- (a) Newly-delivered or up to two year old:
Go North West - SK73 CTU
- (b) Two to five years old:
Lothian Buses - SJ70 HNH

(c) Over five years old:
Blackpool Transport Services - SN67 WZJ

- Each receives a commemorative plaque, with appropriate name tag to follow.

bus driver of the year
championing excellence since 1967

Fourth Place: Simon Vincent Plymouth City Bus

- The BDoY Trophy and £750
- **Second highest-placed Go-Ahead competitor**
- The Go-Ahead Shield and £500

(winning a total of £1,250)

Fifth Place: David Nairn First Bus North & West Yorkshire

- The BDoY Trophy and £500
- **Second highest-placed First Bus competitor**
- The FirstGroup Shield and £500

(winning a total of £1,000)

Best Theory Test Result
● The BDoY Trophy and £300
Second highest-placed McGill's competitor
● The McGill's Runner-up Shield and £500
Gavin Justice - McGill's Bus Group

(winning a total of £800)



Highest-placed competitor from a depot in Wales
● The Rhys Thompson Shield and £100
Mark Baxter - First Cymru



Highest-placed London Buses competitor
● The London Buses Cup and £1,000
Joseph Jay - Go-Ahead London



Second highest-placed Stagecoach competitor
● The Stagecoach Shield and £500
Phil Royle - Stagecoach Merseyside & South Lancashire