

**40th film anniversary for Beaulieu’s Veteran Bus**

[Beaulieu’s](https://www.beaulieu.co.uk/) popular Veteran Bus which has driven thousands of visitors around the attraction is celebrating 40 years since its star appearance in the classic film *The Thirty Nine Steps*.

The much-loved replica of a 1912 London bus made its film debut recreating an early 20th century London street scene in the 1978 film adaptation of John Buchan’s novel. The impressive replica of a London General Omnibus Company B-type double-decker was the perfect prop in the film which starred Robert Powell, John Mills and David Warner.

Powell played Richard Hannay who was working to foil an assassination attempt of a foreign power by secret agents in the lead-up to World War I. One of the most dramatic moments sees Powell hang from the hands of Big Ben and the Veteran Bus is a key feature, seen transporting Edwardian-style passengers around Parliament Square below and stopping for them to watch the action unfold.

The Veteran Bus was one of six [National Motor Museum](https://www.beaulieu.co.uk/attractions/national-motor-museum/) vehicles which featured in the film – including the 1909 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, one of Beaulieu’s most prized cars which also carried celebrities to the Royal Premier of the film in Leicester Square.

This was not the only time the Veteran Bus featured in a film, having also appeared in 1975’s *Love Among the Ruins*, a period TV drama starring Katharine Hepburn and Laurence Olivier and set in Edwardian times.

The build of the Veteran Bus was commissioned by Edward, Lord Montagu, in 1973 to transport visitors between the newly-opened National Motor Museum and Palace House, his home which he opened to the public. It still carries visitors on the same daily journey today.

The open-top body was constructed on the chassis of the then modern Ford K Series tipper truck. With sturdy wood and steel bodywork construction and polished brass fittings retaining an authentic look, it kept its Ford six-litre, six-cylinder diesel engine and five-speed gearbox. This fascinating creation recaptured the sights and sounds of early bus travel but was rugged and powerful enough for the job.

Its builders, SJ Mitchell Limited of Biggleswade, also built an accurate replica of Beaulieu’s 1909 Humber 8hp driven by Sally Ann Howes’ character Truly Scrumptious in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang,* a full-scale recreation of Lady Penelope’s Rolls-Royce ‘FAB 1’ from *Thunderbirds* using a six-wheeled Bedford coach chassis and a life-sized replica of the Apollo 8 space capsule.

The B-type London bus landmark design ushered in a new age of improved reliability for motor buses, while its mass-produced standard components simplified repairs. Over 2,500 examples of this successful bus were built, replacing the last of London’s horse-drawn buses. This rugged machine also had an important role in World War I, when over 1,000 B-types were used to transport troops to the front line.

Beaulieu’s workshop engineers have kept the Veteran Bus running for 45 years of service, modifying and improving its braking system, steering and parts of its body structure. In 1995, the worn-out original engine was replaced with a new, old stock ‘crate’ unit which had been destined to power a diesel generator. The beefed-up version of the six-cylinder engine is slow-revving with a heavy-duty crankshaft but meets the demands of low-speed motoring.

Fully road-legal, the Veteran Bus can be seen on the open road being driven to and from its MOT test each year. With no windscreen or cab doors, a warm coat for the driver is a necessity!

Unlimited rides on the Veteran Bus are included in a general admission ticket to Beaulieu, which includes entry to the National Motor Museum, *World of Top Gear*, Palace House, 13th century Beaulieu Abbey and the stunning grounds and gardens. Tickets can be bought in advance online. For tickets or more details see [www.beaulieu.co.uk](https://www.beaulieu.co.uk/) or call 01590 612345.

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