

# 60 YEARS OF RED RFs

## The red RF bus

Designed for London Transport in 1951, the AEC Regal IV became London's standard single-deck bus in the 1950s and 1960s, serving as Green Line coaches and Country buses as well as on single-deck routes in Greater London. The bus has a 9.6 litre engine laid on its side under the floor, hence 'RF', Regal Flat. The first red RF entered service on route 210 across Hampstead Heath on 11 September 1952 and 225 were built between then and March 1953. They were used initially on routes where double-deck buses could not operate, initially with a driver and conductor. Later on, many were converted for driver-only operation before driver-only double-deckers were available. The last one in London Transport service ran at Kingston on 30 March 1979.

## This bus, RF319 MLL956



Early days of RF operation of route 210. RF430 is seen well loaded at Jack Straw's Castle on Hampstead Heath. Photo Peter Osborn collection

The original RF319 was one of the second batch delivered to Muswell Hill garage in October 1952 for route 210, enabling the first batch to be dispersed round the fleet as training buses. Muswell Hill also operated RFs on the 212, for which another 31 RFs were delivered in February 1953. When the 212 was converted to double-deck operation in January 1960, a

batch of 19 RFs including RF319 were transferred to Kingston for routes 218/219, the routes that were to see the last RFs in London Transport service.

Later RF319 worked at Loughton on route 254, Merton on the 200, Norbiton and Croydon, before returning to Kingston for its last 8 years of LT service.

The bus was sold in 1976 and worked as staff transport for Gor-Ray, before entering preservation in 1985. It was purchased by EnsignBus in 2011 and is available for hire.



Preserved RF319 in Carpenters Road, Stratford, now under the Olympic site, on the 208A at a 2006 running day.. Photo Steve Guess