

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, RF326 MLL963



After withdrawal, RF326 was operated by the SUB Angling Club at Upton Park garage. Paul Cheeseman collection

The bus that is now RF326 started life as RF348 and entered service in November 1952 from Bromley garage on route 227.

The bus changed its identity at overhaul under LT's identity-swapping system, first to RF357, still at Bromley, then (in 1961) RF359, later RF369 and finally RF326. It was based mainly at Edgware from 1963 (when Edgware took over route 251) to 1972.

In 1964, it was fitted with doors to enable

one-man operation.

The bus was withdrawn from service at Norbiton in 1976 and acquired by the angling club at Upton Park garage.

After preservation in the 1980s, the bus was purchased by Centrewest (now part of First Group) and for many years was resident at their Alperton garage.

It was acquired by present owner Paul Cheeseman in 2006.



Restored RF326 was the only RF to work a Red Arrow route, when it ran on the last day of operation of route 500 (Victoria – Marble Arch) in August 1988. Photo John Parkin