

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, RF366 MXX8



Brand new RF390, now RF366, at Kingston in January 1953 on route 213. Photo Geoff Rixon

The bus that is now RF366 started life as RF390 MXX278. RF390 entered service on the first day of 1953 from Norbiton garage on route 213.

The bus spent its whole service life in the Kingston area, its identity changing at overhaul under LT's identity-swapping system, first to RF371, then RF410, RF375 and finally RF366. In 1965, it was fitted with doors to enable one-man operation.

The bus was withdrawn from service in 1976 and passed to the LT Sports Association. In 1985, it carried a party of students to Pompeii.

It was acquired by Jim Andress in 1989 and has been extensively rebuilt, both mechanically and bodily, and returned to its original specification with 41 seats and no doors. RF366 has operated regularly at running days since 1989, and 2012 sees her return to revenue-earning work.



RF366 during rebuild.
Photo Jim Andress