

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, RF368 MXX10



Companion to RF368, at Merton, new RF371 stands at West Wimbledon on route 200. Photo Jim Andress

The original RF368 was one of seven delivered to Merton in December 1952 for route 200. Like the 210, the 200 was denied double-deck buses only as a result of pressure from local residents and being very busy was a priority for the new larger buses. The RFs replaced the characterful Q types dating from 1935.

However, the bus that is now RF368 is one of the first red RFs, delivered to Muswell Hill as RF296 on 19 September 1952 for route 210. It was renumbered several times under LT's identity-swapping system, finally becoming RF368 in 1972.

The bus was withdrawn from service at Edgware in 1977 and acquired by Merton Garage Sea Angling Club, before entering preservation in 1979. Soon after, it was restored to original doorless condition.



RF368 in preservation, with stablemate RF507 (the last in LT service) in the background.

Photo Peter Haining collection