

RMA 9

ABOUT THIS BUS

This unusual Routemaster is from a fleet of 65 designed to work express services to Heathrow.

These were built with electric (front) doors rather than an open platform. They also sported coach-like features such as (rear) air suspension, faster speed, fluorescent lighting, an extra heating system, twin headlamps, and a more luxurious interior.

The fleet was operated by London Transport's Stamford Brook garage (Chiswick) on behalf of **British European Airways** (later British Airways), shuttling between airport and a check-in at West Kensington, via the M4 motorway. Overhead racks were fitted for hand luggage and specially made trailers were towed for suitcases. They were painted blue & white initially, including illuminated logos. Numbered 46, this vehicle was withdrawn quite early, in August 1975.

Purchased by **London Transport** and renumbered RMA 9 ('Routemaster Airways 9'), a year of use followed as a conventional bus on route 175 between Dagenham and Romford (where it was garaged, with 12 others). To begin with it remained in the orange & white colours it had worn since 1970, but later it was painted conventional red. No proper destination blinds were fitted.

Following a couple of years stored, in 1979 it went to Catford garage to transport staff to and from the bus overhaul works at Aldenham, Herts. When the works became the responsibility of subsidiary Bus Engineering Limited in 1985, RMA 9 followed suit, continuing in a similar rôle. Aldenham closed in 1986 but staff services to another site in Chiswick continued, and the bus was painted grey with red window frames in December. Often it was stabled in the yard of BTS coaches, Borehamwood.

In April 1988 the bus became a **Wembley Stadium** courtesy vehicle, painted maroon (see photo, right). By 1997, painted blue, it was to be found promoting the band **the Beautiful South**. Most of the seats had been removed.



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RMA 9 went to Scotland in 2001 for refurbishment by **Mac Tours** of Edinburgh, including the fitting of speakers. It was painted crimson & cream, but never entered service until October 2002. By this time the company had been taken over by **Lothian Buses** and the livery changed to blue & yellow, branded for the "Majestic Tour" to Leith (home of the former royal yacht Britannia). In 2004, now known as number 19, it was re-powered with a brand new Allison transmission, Cummins engine (meeting Euro 2 emission standards), and catalytic converter. See photo, left.

Timebus purchased the bus in March 2009, and painted it into our red livery. Destination blinds were also installed. This refurbished "Routemaster Express" is available for private hires and excursions. If you would like to hire any of our classic London buses, please contact us.



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