

Revell Germany 1/24th Scale London Bus

by Chellie M. Lynn

This latest release from Revell Germany's Classic Vehicles series provides the opportunity to model one of the great icons of London. In 1947 London Transport began studies for what would become the Routemaster double-decker bus. In 1951 AEC (Associated Equipment Company) signed on to develop the bus. Douglas Scott of Scott Ashford Associates designed the body in 1952 and 1953 saw the AEC mechanicals mounted to the prototype bodyshells.



Running prototypes were unveiled in 1954 with service trials commencing forthwith. In 1956 an initial order for 850 buses was placed with initial deliveries planned for 1958. The first delivery of a production unit occurred on May 11, 1958 with full scale production achieved by early 1959. Production ended in 1968 with 2,876 units built, almost all by AEC and Park Royal Vehicles. Regular overhauls and a 1996 repowering program utilizing the Scania DS9 Euro spec engine have kept the Routemaster running for 54 years. Not bad for a vehicle with a design life of 17 years!

The Routemaster had a fully integrated self-supporting body jig built of aluminum on a steel frame. This was mounted on two mechanical subframes front and rear. It was

powered by an AEC AV590 9.6 litre diesel engine, with drive provided by an epicyclic transmission mounted amidships under the floor. Production features included power assist steering, constant pressure hydraulic brakes and heaters for both passenger levels.

Revell Germany's kit provides for construction of an RML model Routemaster, which was two feet longer than the initial RM series. Optional parts are included for construction of almost any two-man operation variant. This includes a complete Scania DS9 engine from the 1996 repower program. Double wall construction (interior and exterior) allows for fantastic detail without masses of sink marks. Decals

include the seat upholstery pattern which will save considerable time and frustration. The proper floor paneling is also included on the decal sheet. All areas seem to have the requisite details for a proper appearance. Some detail has been simplified or done as a deep relief engraving. All in all it truly looks the part.

From all available references this kit is spot-on, just like Revell Germany's other truck kits. A quick tape up of the parts indicates that it looks right, so I shall call it good.

I think this kit will be a bit of a challenge to assemble, but test fittings indicate that there should be no significant problems. The sheer number of parts will eat a fair bit of time, but items such as separate window frames will ease painting. Revell Germany's typical booklet instructions run through 90 steps from start to finish. My only niggle with the kit so far is that the AEC AV590 9.6 litre engine is identified as a Leyland unit throughout. List price in the US is \$100. Worth it? I believe so, but time will be the ultimate determination. Off I go to building, first with the AEC engine, then with the Scania DS9 and other late life enhance-

ments. I may even dare to backdate one to the initial production RM series. I would suggest obtaining a copy of Haynes' s *Routemaster Bus 1954 Onwards (All Marks)* before commencing building this kit, as it is the perfect reference.

Review model provided by my still whimpering purse through Skyway Model Shop.

References

Routemaster Bus: 1954 Onwards (all marks) Enthusiast's Manual, by Andrew Morgan, Haynes Books, 2011.