

Bus sets speed record, runs on biomethane compressed natural gas

May 25 2015, by Nancy Owano



Credit: BBC

Reading Buses in the UK has pulled off a successful land speed world record for a regular service bus. After several practice laps, the bus made news as it completed a track run in 76.785 mph. The bus is normally speed-limited to 56 mph. That was not the only bit of news about the record; it is significant as the bus was powered by biomethane compressed natural gas.

BBC News [carried the report](#); the [bus](#), reflecting the nature of its fuel, was fittingly painted black and white like a Friesian cow. The fuel comes from animal waste which is broken down in a process called [anaerobic digestion](#) to produce biogas, which is then liquefied, said Martijn Gilbert, chief executive of Reading Buses, in the BBC report.

Now billed as the fastest "cow-powered" bus in the world, as remarked in a BBC News video, it stretches the boundaries of technology, and could become commonplace in public transport.

The BBC report quoted John Bickerton, chief engineer, who said the company wanted the "world's first service bus speed record" to bring awareness of the viability, power and credibility of buses thus fueled. "Most importantly we wanted to get the image of bus transport away from being dirty, smelly, and slow. We're modern, fast, and at the cutting edge of innovation."

(No, the CNG-run bus does not smell, there is no smell from the exhaust when the bus is running, said the Reading Buses site. "You won't smell anything from the gas tanks either, the same as you wouldn't smell diesel from any other bus engine.")

The Reading Buses site noted compressed [natural gas](#) is "a much cleaner fuel that produces no particulates (no soot, in other words), no hydrocarbons, virtually zero carbon and drastically reduces the amount of nitrogen oxide (55% less) put into the [air](#)."

The UK Timing Association confirmed the new record. Trevor Duckworth, the association's chief timekeeper, said it was "quite a sight."

The fuel is stored in tanks fixed inside the roof of the bus.

Reading Buses' "Bus Hound" set the record at Bedford's Millbrook Proving Ground. The name Bus Hound pays homage to the Bloodhound SSC team who are currently attempting a [land](#) speed [record](#) of 1,000 mph.

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