

The World of Personal Number Plates

Regtransfers

.co.uk

Summer 2006

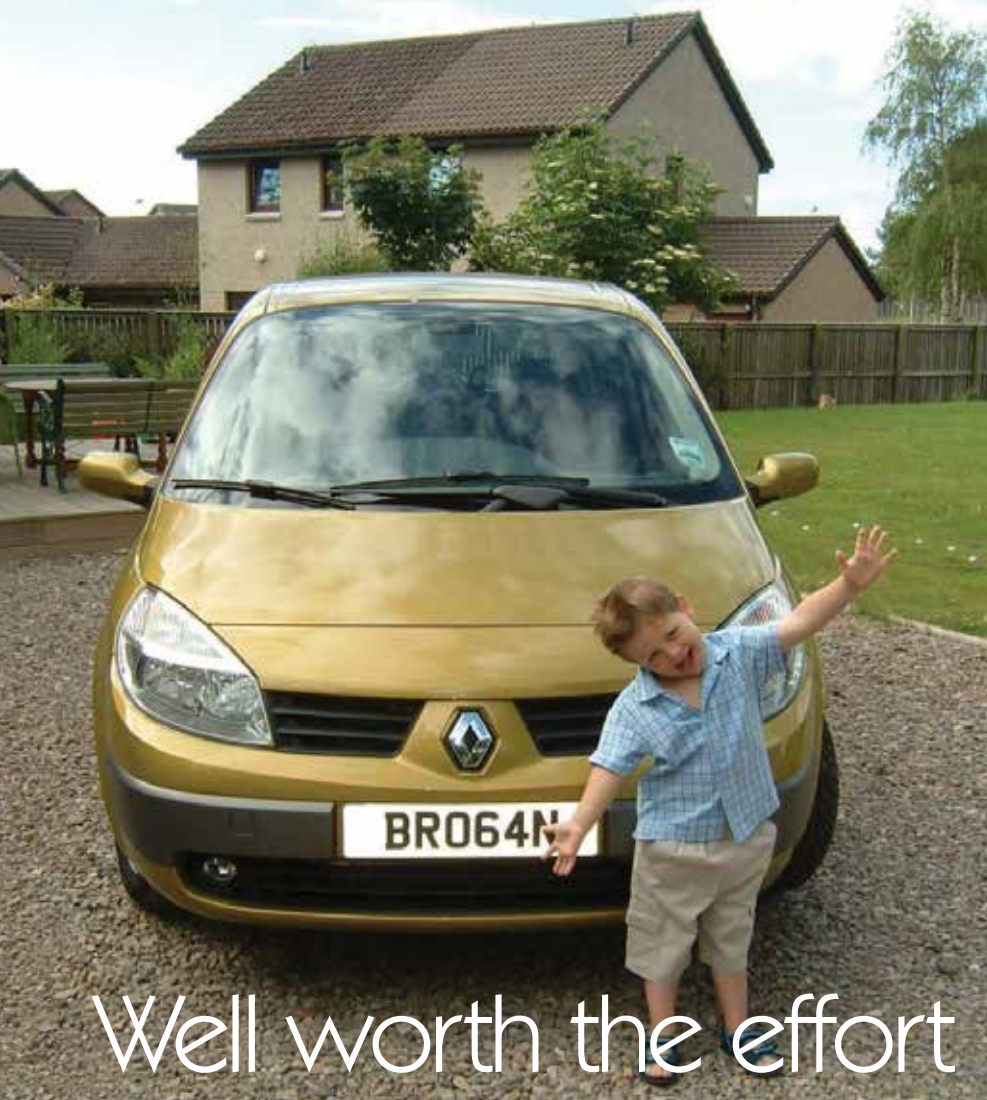
Inside this issue:

Celebrity stylist
Nicky Clarke



Summer 2006 £5 where sold





Well worth the effort

When we found out that **BRO 64N** wasn't registered at all by the DVLA we set about requesting it to be released.

We naively thought we would simply have to pay the set fee and the plate was ours. Then we discovered all about the auctioning process.

Having lost out on the day, we saw you advertise the plate a few weeks later and had to retrieve it - after all, we'd initiated the whole thing and it would have been galling to see it somewhere else after all the effort!

It's an investment for our son, Brogan John Thomson (4) who is pictured here. He learned to say B-R-O sixty-four -N before he could say his own name!

I'd like to say that, in spite of our disappointment at having to re-enter the fray for the purchase of a plate which we had originally come up with, your staff were very helpful and sympathetic in dealing with the transaction.

John, Angela & Brogan Thomson
Lossiemouth, Scotland.

Not too bad



I am 16 years of age and will be able to drive in a few months. In a part exchange, my father has bought me a brand new car! Now, to go with that brand new car, he also got me a brand new personal registration. This is our second registration now and I think they're great!

I can't thank you enough for the service that you have given me. I am really proud of my new registration, **TO06 BAD** and I will cherish it for life. It has really added style to my new car!

Anthony Frankland
St Albans

Letters & emails

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or email:
editorial@regtransfers.co.uk

Twice as Nice



I thought it was about time I sent you a photo of the **S80 VLO** plate, which I bought from you last year.

Everything went so quick and easy. I was really pleased. The plate looks great on my Volvo S80.

I've already had two people wanting to buy it from me, at twice the price I paid.

But it's mine and I'm keeping it!!

Marc Farmer
Wiltshire

That's the spirit! - Ed.



What's the Story?

Do you have a story about number plates?

If so, please send an email to:
editorial@regtransfers.co.uk



A Matching Pair

I bought the registration **JIB 338** several years ago for my Triumph Stag. More recently, whilst browsing through the personal number plate sites, I found **JIB 3388** for sale. At the time I couldn't really afford it and thought "Do I need another personal plate?".

Well, the answer was no - but I bought it anyway!

As you can see from the pictures, they look good as a matching pair. Unfortunately, as both the cars are in excellent condition, I no longer like to use them in the rain which is a bit of a nuisance as I have had to go out and buy a car for the bad weather - my neighbours must think I am a car dealer!

John Broad
Sidcup

A Byers' Market



I bought **D13 YRS** from Regtransfers for my son **Dean Byers** for his 17th birthday.

My wife and I were wondering what to get and decided on something which would be personal to him and last a lifetime. As he is very interested in cars, we thought a private number plate would be something special.

As we are driving around, people stop and stare. Dean's friends cannot believe the number plate we have purchased. Dean had been totally unaware of this and his face lit up as we presented him with the car and number plate.

Dean will now be cruising around Carlisle thinking he is the coolest dude around.

Darin Byers
Carlisle

Canine Corner!

I recently purchased the plate **ALF 1A** from you. The reason being that in 1974 I purchased a young racing greyhound from Ireland called *Alfa Boy*. This puppy established himself as a top dog in England. Hence he went to stud.

To protect the name *Alfa*, I registered the prefix in both Ireland and England. This is to safeguard this name so that no other person can use this name for racing greyhounds other than myself. This prefix has been carried by more than 100 dogs over the years and is still in use and well known.

I am a professional trainer and am pictured with *Alfa Spot On* and *Alfa Anyway*. I have scanned through registration numbers for many years and as soon as I saw this number I phoned and secured it with your sales advisor, Shane.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank your company for the helpful and efficient way they dealt with my trouble free purchase.

Leon Steed
by Email



Having owned Rottweilers for ten years, I thought when purchasing my Land Rover Freeland TD4 it would be the perfect opportunity to display my love of the breed. So, I started searching for a registration that would do just that. I contacted Regtransfers who found just the one - **A12 0TY**.

It was such a bargain I just had to have it. As soon as my certificate arrived I rushed off to a graphics company who made the plates for me. I did specify that they weren't to be modified too much so as not to attract too much attention from the boys in blue!! I was over the moon with the result.

To complete the image, the same company also transferred pictures of my current seven month old Rottweiler Fagan, as pictured, alongside my late nine-year-old faithful, Fradley.

Tina Bramwell
Birmingham



Eric Morecambe - A Sad Farewell



It was a sad day when Eric Morecambe's wife, Joan, decided to sell his beloved 1974 Rolls-Royce along with the number plate, **EM 100**. She had previously said that she couldn't bear to part with it, but finally relented after the car had stood solemnly in her garage for over 20 years.

Eric, the whackier half of the unforgettable comedy duo, Morecambe and Wise, enjoyed touring in the car and ensured that it was well looked after through the years. It had only travelled 74,000 miles and even had its original eight-track stereo and some of his favourite tapes inside when it finally went to auction at Coys in London, on December 4th, 2005.

It was expected to fetch around £24,000 but finally realised over £36,000, somewhat to the surprise of Joan. She knew how much the car had meant to Eric and how it also showed that he had "arrived", but she always felt there was something about it that made her not want to let it go. Joan admitted that she should have sold it years ago but being a terrible hoarder she just clung onto it without really understanding why herself.

The car, and its famous registration, was purchased on the day by an anonymous bidder on behalf of three enthusiastic private buyers from East Lancashire. Apparently they have set up a company called Legend Cars and intend to use it for charity work

and event hire, both areas that we feel Eric would find fitting.

At the time Joan remarked, "I hope the next owner enjoys the car every bit as much as I know Eric did".

Eric sadly died in May 1984 and is especially missed by many of our own employees as he was a director of our local football team, Luton Town.



A quick test of your current affairs knowledge: can you name three celebrity hair stylists?

Hands up everyone who thought of Nicky Clarke and then struggled to come up with more... Most of you, eh? Not to worry, the same thing happened when we tried it in the editorial office.



Not since the swinging 60s, the era of Raymond "Mr Teasy-Weasy"

Bessone and Vidal Sassoon, has there been a stylist to the famous who has become quite such an A-list celebrity in his own right. In Nicky Clarke's case the fame is well earned, and his ability at his art is in no doubt. It takes a rare talent to sweep both the British Hairdresser of the Year and London Hairdresser of the Year awards in the same year.

Nicky Clarke's career began in the most auspicious of environments. In the 1970s, at the age of 16, he went to work at the legendary Leonard's of Mayfair.

"I was advised - and rightly so, I still believe - not to go to college. Go to a good salon instead. Start at the bottom, sweeping the floor and polishing the brass. You know you can't go any lower, so you concentrate on aiming high."

His aim was obviously true. Nicky now owns salons in Mayfair, Manchester and Birmingham. He opened the Mayfair salon in 1991, at the urging of his business partner and former wife, Lesley. It was a great move; the business rapidly went from strength to strength, and the list of rich and famous clients

Nicky Clarke

just got longer and longer. Gwyneth Paltrow, Sophie Dahl, Yasmin Le Bon, George Michael, David Bowie, Gary Kemp, Damon Hill, Nick Faldo, Gary Lineker, Denise van Outen and others have all visited Nicky. And then, of course, there are the royal clients... but space is limited, so we'll stop there for now.

successful

In addition to the salons themselves, Nicky and Lesley have widened their focus to include their own haircare products. In 1993, they introduced the highly successful Nicky Clarke Hairomatherapy range. Additional lines have followed including the *Nicky Clarke Electric* range of home styling tools, *Colour Therapy* and *Vita Therapy* supplements to promote optimum hair health.

Nicky Clarke's status as the king of hairdressers is clearly beyond doubt, as are his household-name credentials. Indeed, he has popped up in the most unexpected places - especially on television: *Hell's Kitchen*, *Comic Relief*, *Shooting Stars*, *An Audience with Elton John*, *Absolutely Fabulous*... Then of course there are the regular appearances on daytime TV. Pretty much any make-over show worth its salt has sought his involvement.

So, when Nicky Clarke decides he would like to personalise his car a little, there is only one number plate that really says it all: **H41 RDO**.

MOUNT STREET W1
CITY OF WESTMINSTER

The Regtransfers.co.uk team delivers Nicky's new plates on the day of the interview. Nicky is delighted, and now sports the great registration on his Jeep. His daughter, Tilly, obviously appreciates the perfect match as soon as Nicky shows her the number.

"No way! Oh my God, that is so cool! And it's really quite subtle."

Nicky's son and daughter are well qualified to judge: they are both personal plate veterans. Tilly displays **T1 LYC** on her limited edition pink Ford Ka, and Harrison has **D8 HJC** ("Date Harrison J Clarke") - a kind of joke whose effectiveness Nicky doubts.

"Yes, it was kind of a pulling thing but just a fraction too subtle. No one ever got it! They just saw the D8."

"No," insists Harrison, tongue firmly in cheek. "One of my best friends, about a year after I got it, said 'aren't those your initials?'. A hint of gentle sarcasm creeps into his voice, as he grins, "I was like, 'No! Really?'."

enthusiasm

The whole family's enthusiasm for their personal plates is quite evident and it is great to see people really enjoying them. Harrison in particular is a fan.

"I am always looking at plates," he says. "I just think they're good. Something simple like three letters on a car, it stands out." Harrison produces his mobile phone and shows a photo he took of a plate he saw and particularly admired near where he works.

Nicky laughs. "You just went and took a photo of it?"

Nicky is actually the last member of the family to succumb. Lesley also beat him to it: her Porsche bears the impressive **1 LC**. After some time, Nicky began to realise that everyone around him, both family and friends, seemed to have added the personal touch to their vehicles, and he did start looking.

"It was one of those things I never



Tilly displays **T1 LYC** on her limited edition pink Ford Ka

**- a cut above
the rest**





> > >

really thought about, but a friend of ours has got **N1 KKY** or something similar. She's a client and a friend, and of course every time she pulls up in her really girly car everyone thinks it's mine because of the number! I tell her not park it too near the salon, please! But with mine, it's one of those things where I haven't really gone out and thought 'Oh, I must get one with **1 NC**' or something. I prefer the amusing side of it."

passion

It really does seem that it is the sheer fun aspect that interests Nicky, rather than any urge to show off or demonstrate his success with his number plates. That emphasis on fun and enjoyment is obviously a prime motivator in Nicky's professional life too, and he is still very much hands-on where hairdressing is concerned. The passion for his craft clearly remains, and is reflected in his preference for the youngest, rawest recruits when training new staff. As he opens more salons, Nicky obviously find himself in need of top-notch stylists, but he would rather train from scratch than try to force people to unlearn the techniques taught by other stylists.

"It's not like a *KFC* franchise," he says. "It's not a situation where I can say 'Here's the recipe, now off you go!', so I can't have just anybody doing it. I prefer 16 year olds to train: it means I get them raw, and I really do like being able to mould them. There is no past training to overcome."

So is Nicky's approach to styling really that different?

"Yes. That's why I prefer to train from raw. If someone has been trained in another method and they suddenly move between companies, well then there is generally just slight tweaking to be done. Moving from that to what I do is a major shift - a real change.

"For one thing, my method involves dry-cutting in a way that makes it quite an unusual thing. There's not been too much of that in the last 30 years, just a few of us doing it. I do what I call my 'rough sketch' wet, but all my fine-tuning is done dry. It's like a piece of sculpture: like you're chipping away at something until it's absolutely right. The attention to detail is much greater. It's a hard thing to teach en masse because you're basically trying to

show someone how they really have to use their eyes. They've almost got to breathe it and live it.

"So I have assistants working with me very closely, and I suppose from the outside it looks very grand when you're doing it. People sometimes think 'Oh he's being such an arse, he needs someone holding the hair for him!', but what they don't get is that there are two very real reasons for it. First of all my attention to detail: some sections can be that delicate, so I have somebody holding so I can work on that detail. Secondly, that person who is working with me is learning by actually doing, living it and breathing it, so the method of training is much more fast-track. They are literally on top of it and seeing everything that I do."

conveyor belt

Journalists have misunderstood this close-up training style in the past, and articles have depicted Nicky's process as a conveyor belt, and him as pretentious and, as he puts it, 'swanning around'.

"Oh, I've had a that a few times, because I generally have at least two assistants with me all the time - sometimes I use three. But, you know, I'm juggling. I'll do one wet and while that's being rubbed dry, I'm on the next one. So, I suppose it's easy to think it's a conveyor belt, and for people to think I'm being very grandiose, but actually there's a method in my madness, and it means I can give more people personal attention."

Do Nicky's stylists in all the salons follow the same fundamental technique that he has been telling us about?

"Yeah, oh absolutely. I know that everyone has their own take on it, and there are some people who don't necessary do it exactly as I do, and that's always the way. I mean, if you're employing a hundred and fifty people they're always going to have some of their own methods, but the one thing that stays constant with us is the emphasis on that kind of detail, on that finish that makes it part of our house style.

"It works, and it is working. It's great. It's like all that work I've done for thirty-two years is starting to pay off. And I still cut hair every day!"

The single biggest reason why Nicky still cuts regularly is that he is



"I am always looking at plates, I just think they're good. Something simple like three letters on a car, it stands out."

fascinated by the diverse nature of his clientele.

"You really do get to meet everybody," he says. "Ok some people would say that's everybody who has four hundred quid in their pocket [the cost of a first-time cut by Nicky], but really, I do meet people from all walks of life, and I just love it. As much as I've done hundreds and hundreds of the celebrities, probably more than most, the biggest buzz from actual hairdressing actually comes from working on ordinary people. I like to work on the people whose husband, boyfriend, partner, kids, or whatever, have sent them in for a treat, or people who have decided to treat themselves.

"To those people it's really something. They look around and they can just see the standards we set. That's not the case everywhere: I saw a cut yesterday... I mean, I'm ashamed to say a British stylist did that! It was just appalling. It made me want to turn around and say that any of my junior people would have done it better.

"I use the analogy of the Saville Row suit. I have dozens of suits up

in my wardrobe, but I really prefer the half-dozen or so that have been made for me. I have to pay more for those suits, but you really can tell the difference. The high price may be a bit annoying, but it's a bit like that with haircuts: you can just really see the difference.

bargain

"There are people who can't afford to come very often, but they still come when they can, maybe three times a year, just because of the difference they get from us compared to what they'd get from the other guy. And the cost of coming to me gets lower: the first time is a bit expensive, because it's harder to work on the hair first time, but after that the cost goes down a lot. In fact, it's a bargain!"

The business really is a family concern. Harrison has also joined the team, to Nicky's evident delight.

"I have to say he's been great. He's been with us for a year now. I had thought he was originally going off to university in Edinburgh, but now, rather than just take it as a year out he's actually said that he doesn't really want to go. It was quite hard

>>>

for someone from my generation to accept that. I felt that if you got a place at university you sort of just took it up; but I'm actually coming round to accepting it now."

Harrison says, "I'm the only person from the school that isn't going. And I got one of the highest marks."

Harrison's decision was certainly not down to poor marks. With two A grades and a B he was accepted into one of the UK's top universities. He reasons were more to do with him already being focused on what he wants to do. That focused attitude would still be applied if he did decide later on to attend uni.

"If I was going to go it would be to get a degree, not just to have a good time or anything. I already have a good time here."

Harrison's role is already a varied one. He is training to become a hairdresser, but he is also working hard on the business side. With his fresh perspective he is bringing a new approach and new ideas. He also provides a useful link between Nicky and Lesley and the younger staff, many of whom are his age.

With the business branching out to include so much, there is certainly plenty for Harrison to learn. Nicky is very pleased with the way the additional products have performed.

phenomenal

"We launched *Hairomatherapy* in 1993 and it was, and still is, a phenomenal success. We were the first of the main designers in designer hair care to go into supermarkets. At that time, of course, everybody just thought we were nuts. You have this high-end brand and what do you do? You sell them in *Tesco*. But it worked! And then, on the back of that we launched *Nicky Clarke Electric*, which is now huge. We're one of the biggest in the country. So we sell more men's hair clippers than anybody by two to one. There are about six lines from our range where we are the biggest-seller in the country. It's been a huge, huge success.

"We're re-launching the products in February. Since '93 when we launched the wets (shampoo and conditioners), there're now quite a few celebrity hairdressers around, and actually all on my doorstep! There are four hairdressers in my street... I don't know what they are thinking. It's not like shoe shops where people go in and browse! "

Nicky seems completely unconcerned, and even a little baffled by the thought that any of the new crop might be seen as competition per se, and many would

agree. Certainly, Nicky has been the first really high-profile celebrity hairstylist since the previous generation of superstar crimpers, back in the 1960s and 1970s.

One of the first famous people to visit Nicky's new salon in 1991 was Gianni Versace.

"The night before we opened, he just walked in through the door. He was here for *Vogue's* 75th anniversary and he was staying at the *Connaught*. Anyway, he walked in about 1 o'clock in the morning while we were all there polishing and cleaning and stuff and he said, 'What is this place?', because it wasn't very obvious straight off. So, I said it was a hairdressing salon and he thought it was fabulous.

statues

"There were statues everywhere. You see, a friend of one of my stylists had a really upmarket, smart furniture shop in *Pimlico* but he didn't have enough room to store all his stock, so he said, 'Look, I'll put all the stuff in here!'. So, we had about £5 million worth of furniture. He said that he'd rather show the furniture to customers in situ in central London, and if something was sold he'd simply replace it with something else. It worked out great! We opened and it looked incredible."



"There are four hairdressers in my street... I don't know what they are thinking. It's not like shoe shops where people go in and browse! "



"It's a cut above the rest and not even a mega offer will separate me from it".

London Evening Standard

taken delivery of about twenty of the new *PSP* games consoles. They were just out and Harrison had been trying to get one, so Jonathan just gave one to him!

"Naomi Campbell doesn't always get the best publicity, but I've known her since she was 16 and she's always been lovely. She brings her mum in. The press would probably rather I said that she was bitchy, but I've never seen that. I'm not covering up, that's how I find them. They're always really nice."

mirrors

Hairdressers know all about mirrors, so perhaps it is surprising that Nicky doesn't seem to realise that the reason he finds all his clients seem so nice may be that they are simply reflecting the way he treats them. We certainly found Nicky and his family to be friendly, patient and very helpful. We are very grateful to them for their time and hospitality.

by Rick Cadger

Reporting team:

Angela Banh and John Doherty

Photography: Stan Thompson



www.nickyclarke.com

It certainly impressed Versace, and Nicky did the hair for the opening of the Versace show.

Who are Nicky's current favourites from his list of famous clients?

"I think it would be unfair to name one person, because a lot of them have been around for a long time and I have real affection for.

George Michael has become a friend. Liz Hurley has been a client since we started. She wasn't really known then, she was known mostly as Hugh's girlfriend. But the list is endless. There are a lot of people who are my own heroes; for example, when I'm doing Bowie I have to try to not be too gushing!

"Jonathan Ross is a nice guy. We went to his house once when he had a show to do and he had just



For the past three years, Nicky has been the official hairdresser of the Bafta awards and in February he styled the likes of Mischa Barton, Diane Kruger and Neve Campbell. With this in mind, he has recently created The Red Carpet Style Collection which launched in April 2006. Nicky wanted to give women the chance to experience "red carpet hair" every day and if you do not have the opportunity to see the man himself, this is the next best thing. Nicky has personally developed the new hair care range and has been created to fit in with the Nicky Clarke philosophy, namely gorgeous hair each and every day. To complete the look, personally selected and tailor-made styling tips straight from Nicky are on each of the fiery red packaged products.



Neil's Wheels

I bought my first number plate back in 1982 prompted by a friend of mine who had just purchased his initials. I was fortunate to be offered **33 JYD**, which I first put on my red XR3i and then on many cars after that. The number was purchased from a friend who transferred it a few years before from the original Austin A40 he found in a garage in one of Bath's most prestigious addresses - The Royal Crescent. I still have the original steel number plates for this old Somerset number.

In Bath, and still running to this day, is the Bath Morris Minor Centre where I bought my first number plate with my initials. Parked under the railway arches was the old 'moggy' with **NBO 324** on. After a bit of negotiating I finally bought it and popped it on my car as **NB 0324**. It looked great! In those days number plate retention wasn't available so **33 JYD** was transferred on to my mother's Beetle, which had been in the family for ages.

In the summer of 1998 I saw **367 NB** advertised by **Regtransfers.co.uk** and decided to make the leap and try to buy it. Not easy when you have just had your first child and your wife wants a new kitchen!

Julie, my wife, said: "Well sell your others and see what you can do, after all you don't need three plates when we only have one car".



As a dutiful husband, I sold **33 JYD** to a friend and part-exchanged **NBO 324** with Regtransfers for my new "must have" number plate, **367 NB**. As the transfer regulations had now been simplified it was transferred straight on to my bright yellow Audi Estate. I was so chuffed!

A year later, whilst browsing through the **Regtransfers** magazine, I noticed that **17 NB** was coming up for sale. I just had to have it. My birthday is the 17th, so off to auction I go. I bought it for just about my upper limit, but it's been worth it.

Since then **17 NB** has been on so many cars that the list is too long to mention. However, it is currently on my Porsche 911 Turbo.

I have two bdys, Joshua 11 and Harley 10, both of whom are into cars as well as number plate spotting. I was so pleased when **Regtransfers.co.uk** came up trumps in both cases when I started looking for a couple of early 18th birthday presents for them. I was very lucky to have been able to buy **JO51 HUA** and **H46 LEY**. What a cracking pair of plates, one of which is currently on my wife's Mercedes and the other on my run-around. For a bit of fun I also have **N88 OWN** (N BROWN), which is, in fact, for sale if anyone is interested.

My mother-in-law Josie wasn't to be left out of all this family number plate madness and so I was lucky to find **J111 SEE** for her. She absolutely loves the number and has had it on many of her Ford Kas ever since.

Recently I was having some plates made up by our local suppliers when I noticed on the wall a number for sale. It was **GFB 446**, a local Somerset number. The man selling it



wanted £500 so I phoned my dad and he agreed I should buy it. Dad's initials are actually GEB - a little clever handiwork and it looks the part.

Number plates have always been of interest to me. Up until last year I ran the sales department of our local Ford dealer and many a time a customer would ask if I could help in locating a number for them. Many of my friends have also asked me the same question. I remember one customer was a fan of *Dexy's Midnight Runners* for whom I managed to buy **D6 XYS**. I also found **P4 DUK** for a friend, Miss Paddock, **M6 LRB** for my hairdresser Mel and her husband Rob Brooks and **V16 NDA** for Vanda, another good friend, for her 40th birthday. The list goes on.



These days I run my own business. I'm still in the motor trade and will probably keep on buying, and enjoying, personal registration numbers for a long time to come.

Regtransfers.co.uk has always given me excellent service and the number plates they provided have given me, my family and my friends a lot to smile about for a very long time to come.

Neil Brown

What's the Story?

Do you have a story about number plates?

If so, please send an email to: editorial@regtransfers.co.uk

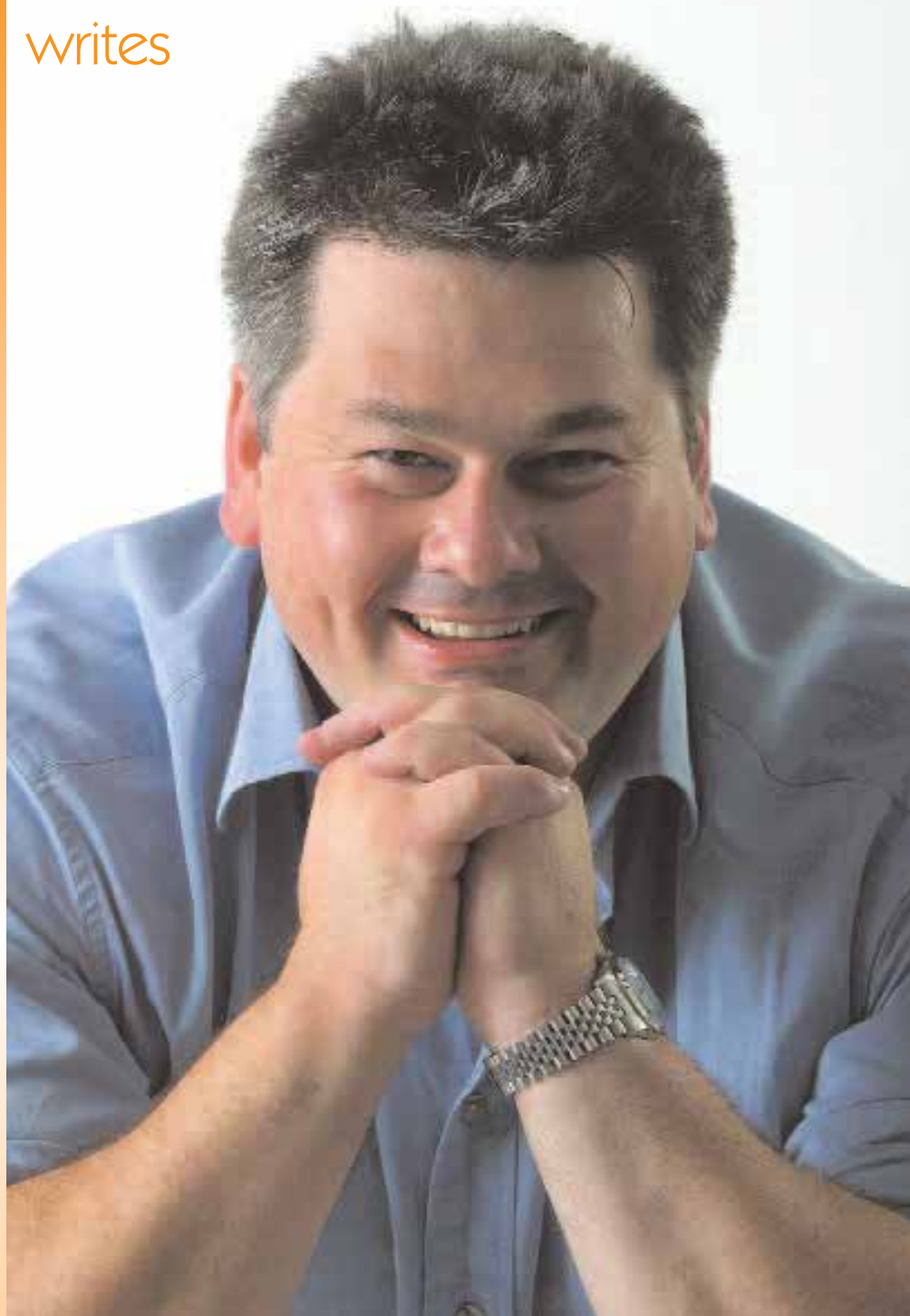
First of a series of specially commissioned articles for **The World of Personal Number Plates** from the respected newspaper columnist and TV presenter, who delivers his **Top 5** round-up of cheap thrills and the cars that deliver maximum power for minimum cash

Power for Peanuts

I'm not keen on flying. I don't like the fact that that aeroplane wings flex or that outside the cabin it might be minus 50°C. I'm also clearly the wrong shape for the regulation issue seats and I nearly always end up spilling my miniature cans of complimentary *Coca Cola* within minutes of leaving the tarmac.

But what I do love is the take off. That wonderful surge of power as you sink back into your seat and accelerate from 0-100mph in just a few seconds.

So it's hardly surprising that when it comes to choosing a means of transport my preferred choice is something that does away with the poor seating, dodgy catering and floppy wings but retains that heart pounding acceleration. I call them sports cars.



I don't actually drive very quickly anymore, but I do enjoy the sensation of effortless acceleration. I also like the rest of the kit that generally accompanies them, like good brakes, sharp steering and good handling. And, rather like air travel, good sports cars don't have to be expensive. In fact you can have as much fun for a few thousand pounds as someone spending tens of thousands.

So here's my **Top 5** round-up cheap thrills, the cars that deliver the

maximum power for the minimum cash, I call them my **Power for Peanuts** superstars.

5 In at five is the **TVR Griffith**, the definitive British sports car. Its 5 litre V8 engine produces 320bhp and endows it with performance that will have it crawling all over the rear bumper of the Ferrari up to 100mph. Good examples regularly change hands for around £12,000 and as long as you treat the car as a bit of a hobby and don't mind fettling >>>

>>> it a little then on a sunny day with the engine burbling on the over run you'll feel like a racing hero.

My pick: a 1994 'L' Griffith for £12,000/320bhp giving a £/power ratio of £37.50

4 In at four is a very different looking beast - the **Mitsubishi 3000GT**. It doesn't possess the same timeless styling of the TVR but when it comes to wallop the twin turbo 282bhp engine is no slouch. There's also plenty of Japanese imports around that have been tricked up with all manner of tuning bits so getting over 350bhp is easily possible. I'm not a fan of non-standard cars like that but each to their own and if you want *max* power for *min* money it knocks the TVR into a cocked hat.

My pick: a 1993 'K' Mitsubishi 3000GT for £7,000/282bhp giving a £/power ratio of £24.82



3 At three is a car that I've wanted since I was a kid, the **Lotus Esprit**. Made famous by James Bond in *The Spy who Loved Me*. Some thirty years on, the original shape still looks as stunning as the day it was first designed. Get one in white and you can live the secret agent dream, or if you fancy a bit more go plump for a later turbo charged version. The engines may be prone to a little bit of overheating and the gearbox is one

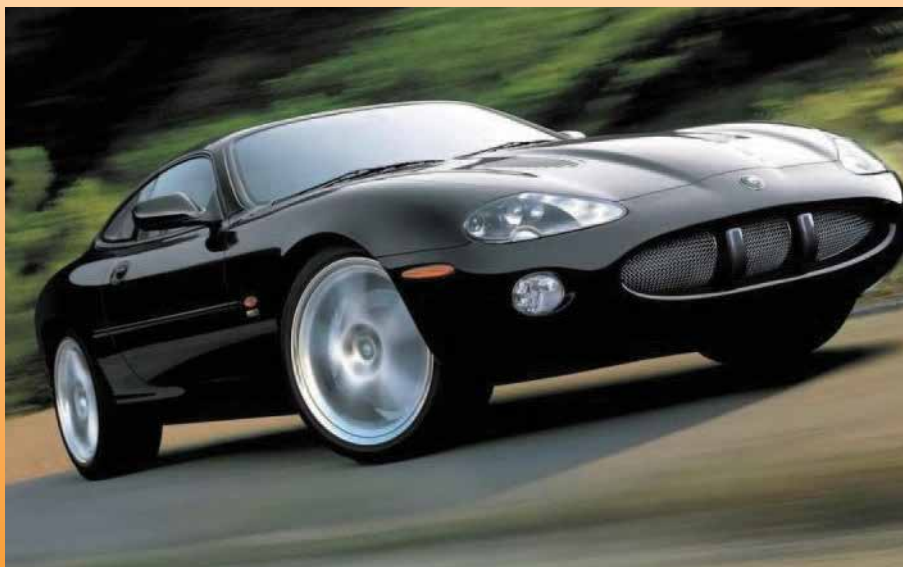
of the trickiest I've ever used but for high days and holidays what a lot of fun!

My pick: a 1985 Lotus Esprit Turbo for £3,500/210bhp giving a £/power ratio of £16.66



2 Almost getting my top vote but missing it by a whisker is the **BMW M6**. Back in the late eighties even Ferrari struggled to pump out 300bhp from their super cars, yet BMW managed 286bhp from a relatively conservative looking coupé. Being German BMW was terribly sensible and limited the top speed to 155mph but it was a car that felt like it could do another 15mph or so. If you've ever been tempted by an M6 don't wait any longer to buy one, get it now. The new BMW 6-series has breathed life into the idea of a big fast BMW coupé and prices are rising.

My pick: a 1988 'E' BMW M635 coupé for £3,000/286bhp giving a £/power ratio of just £10.50



1 And in at number one, it's the **Jaguar XJS**. Not one of those slightly asthmatic little cylinder versions but a gas guzzling 5.3 litre V12. The engine bay looks like it was put together by a demented plumber and keeping it running smoothly requires a blend of inspiration and perspiration. Just like its forerunner, the E-Type, the XJS has fallen out of favour and MoT failures regularly get junked or split for parts, but get one with 12 months MoT for a grand and you will have a years memorable motoring.

My pick: a 1985 'B' Jaguar XJS 5.3 V12 for £1,000/266bhp giving a £/power ratio of just £3.75

Jason Dawe writes a weekly used car column in the *Sunday Times*. He worked with **Jeremy Clarkson** on *Top Gear* and now presents the *Used Car Roadshow* on ITV's *Men and Motors* at 9pm on Monday nights.

As a former car salesman, Jason has 20 years experience in the motor industry and is acknowledged as the country's leading used car expert. You can contact Jason via his website www.jasondawe.com.

Keith Fletcher



had an evening and weekend job working for a local ice-cream company, putting the sticks into lollipops.

As the years passed he was allowed to drive and park the ice-cream vans in the compound and started to check the tax disc holders for expired discs, which he began to collect. Looking at the numbers and letters and seeing that these were often the initials of the company or driver, Keith's fascination for number plates was born.

By the age of 17, using money he had saved from his part-time job, Keith started his own TV rental company. He managed to secure financial backing from a large television manufacturer and during the time that the business was being built up, Keith found himself in debt

As you drive into the exclusive rural enclave that is home to Keith Fletcher, you could be forgiven for thinking that you are in Adderley Edge or at least on the set of "Footballers' Wives", but we are in a leafy village in Leicestershire outside the home of this local business man and entrepreneur. With a fleet of rather interesting cars to his name all bearing personal number plates you

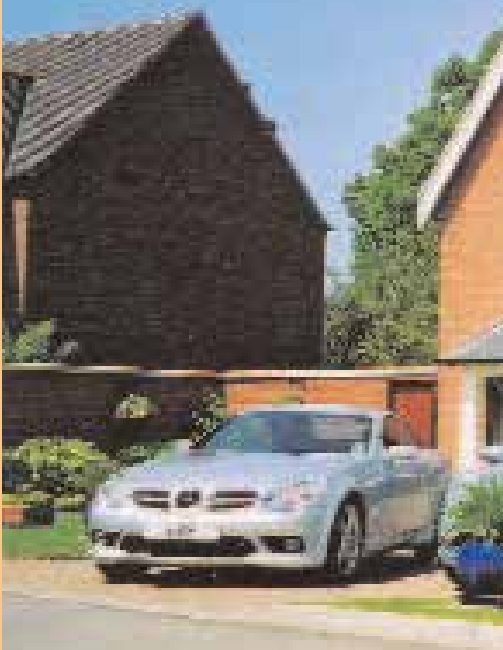
instinctively know that here, there is a story to be told.

Keith explains how his interest in registration plates started in the mid-1950's when, at the age of 11, he

What's the Story?

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to the tune of £1,000,000, at the age of just 28. There were occasions when the business could have gone either way. With shops in the Midlands and the north of England, events such as the coal miners' strike had the knock-on effect of customers having problems with repayment times. However, with a business as finely tuned as one of Keith's beloved cars, good fortune was with him and Keith's business was ultimately successful. The company was eventually sold in 1989 to a national organisation and at one point was one of the largest privately owned TV rental companies in the country.

The mid-sixties saw Keith in a position to purchase more expensive cars and it was at this time that he bought the number plates **5 KF** and **8 KF** for the princely sum of £200 each. The value today stands at £25-30,000; one of the best investments Keith has made.

Along the way Keith has been involved in motor racing, and has driven in various racing formulas. Keith even went as far as to open the possibility of driving professionally at Formula 1 standard. At this time however, there was a professional driver being killed almost every week - a very different sport to the one we



see today. Maybe the thrill Keith gets from business has proved to be the safer option in the long run!

The thrill Keith got from speed continued with his involvement in the world of aviation. Keith has held various pilots licences and owned a variety of aeroplanes. Even the planes have had private registrations!

Keith's successful businesses have allowed him to indulge his love of fast cars. His present collection comprises of a Bentley, Ferrari, Porsche and Mercedes. Probably the most interesting is the Porsche Carrera GT - the most powerful car Porsche has ever produced. Only 1200 have been made, assembled in Leipzig, Germany and will be completed in April 2006. Only around 35 have made their way to the UK, with the majority now owned by film

stars and celebrities, which this most unassuming man is most certainly not! He received an invitation to the Porsche factory to see the car assembled, which you can be assured will have fuelled even more interest in cars. If there is one thing this man has in abundance, it is enthusiasm.

To complement the look of the Carrera, Keith purchased **7 KF** from Regtransfers. The last registration Keith purchased from Regtransfers was **1 KWF**, which is proudly displayed on a Ferrari Spider 430 FI. This plate has already doubled in value in the last 12 months.

As Keith jumps into his red 'prancing horse' and is gone, you know that those quiet country lanes of Leicestershire will never be quite the same again.



Plates off the top shelf

Rack Storage Systems has established itself as a market leader in storage equipment and prides itself on offering a friendly and personal service, supplying new and used racking, shelving and mezzanine floors to many thousands of customers throughout the UK.

As well as supplying businesses and homeowners, the company has even provided for the likes of *Chelsea Football Club*, *BMW*, *Coca-Cola*, the *BBC* and *Harrods*.

Rack Storage has recently invested £1.25 million in developing its workforce and warehouse facility, based in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire.

Managing Directors, Craig Harper and Paul Smith have purchased a number of plates from Regtransfers, including **1 OIL**, which currently adorns Craig's Porsche 911. They also own **DEX 10N** (after the world's largest racking company), **1 HPR**, **1 BVS**, **1 RHH**, **RHH 2R**, and **UN05 HME**, since Craig first purchased **C2 HAR** from Regtransfers for £500.

Craig has also sold some number plates through Regtransfers: **WFL 1**, **1 HDL** and **15 WN**, showing that

number plates are also a fantastic investment opportunity.

As Quentin Willson from *Top Gear* magazine stated: "If you buy your number wisely, it will honestly be better than money in the bank."

Craig particularly likes the Number 1 plates, and says that his ultimate plates would be **CRH 1** or **1 CRH** for himself, and **1 RSS** or **RSS 1** for their company.

For more information on Rack Storage Systems or to order their catalogue, you can visit their website at: www.rackstorage.co.uk

Adam Croft





Business partners **Craig Harper** and **Paul Smith**

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Baskerville hounds the DVLA

*A very satisfied customer, **Graham Baskerville**, tells us the story behind his choice of registration and his experience of the transfer process.*

Following the death of my father in early 2000, my mother decided to give up driving and sell the family car - a Vauxhall Astra Arctic, a little under two years old. Due to my father's illness the car had spent most of its life just sitting in the garage at home. Obviously it was still in immaculate condition and had only a few thousand miles on the clock.

My mother offered this to me at a very fair price prior to advertising it for sale in the local paper. I decided that this was too good an opportunity to turn down. I was not in immediate need of a new car but thought it would be something nice to remember my dad by and so I agreed to buy the car.

I have always been very interested in car registration numbers and thought this was

an ideal time to try and find one to put on the Astra in order to disguise its age, so I needed a plate without a year letter. This immediately pushed the price up. I had spent many months looking at adverts in the newspapers, Exchange and Mart and various number plate dealers, but could not find anything of interest that I could afford.

A friend of mine suggested Regtransfers.co.uk and so, with nothing to lose, I telephoned them. This was in February 2002. My call was answered by a very polite and helpful lady called Justine Burman. She asked me a few questions in order to establish what I was looking for: without a year letter and at a price that I could afford.

Ideally I wanted a number plate with my initials on it (GB) but the only ones available were far too expensive. She suggested one or two numbers and also asked for my email address. She promised to look through all their numbers and send me a list of ones that she thought would fit the bill. This

she did and I ended up with a list of fifteen numbers, all without year letters ranging from £2000 to £3000.

The only problem then was to pick out which one I liked best. I had spoken to my friend again, who already had a private number plate and he suggested trying to find one that stood for something, or meant something to me. We looked at each number in turn and tried to make something up for it.

I called Justine again to thank her for such a prompt and helpful response. I told her I could not make up my mind and she suggested a few that looked like somebody's initials. As she pointed out, when you're driving along nobody would know if they were your initials or not. As I could not afford a number plate with GB on it, then this could be the next best thing. A plate that looked good and looked like initials would be a good second choice. As people kept telling me, private number plates keep going up in value so if I got fed up with it in a few years I could

always re-sell it. In fact I think it has doubled in value in just over 3 years!

I decided to go for **5 FBJ**. It looked good but was a bit more than I really wanted to pay and so I asked if the seller would be prepared to accept an offer. Justine said she would have to contact them and find out. If I could make a reasonable offer, close to the asking price, then she would be happy to put it forward. This she did and after a few calls back and forth, a deal was struck.

I must point out that at no time was I put under any pressure to buy or to make my mind up quickly or indeed make any offer or pay any deposit. The whole process was done at my pace and I think this is the main reason I would recommend Regtransfers to anyone looking to buy a private number plate - no high pressure salesmen . . . or women!

I had plenty of time to think about it, chew things over and speak to other people first. I did actually telephone other dealers to see what they had on offer and got a feeling that some of them just wanted to sell me something, anything, just to make a sale.

The next problem I had was that as the car had just been sitting around in the garage it was not taxed, insured or MoT'd (it was now three years old and due for its first test.) therefore I could not simply transfer the new number across onto it. It was suggested that I purchased the **5 FBJ** number as originally agreed and that it was supplied to me on a retention certificate. This is a document issued by the DVLA stating that the person named on the certificate is entitled to assign the number on it to any vehicle registered in their name. This would allow me time to get the

Vauxhall Astra back on the road under its original number plate. Then I could either: take all the paperwork to my local vehicle licensing centre in Wimbledon; or send it all back to Regtransfers, as they had kindly agreed to sort it all out for me once I was ready to proceed.

Another very important point to bear in mind is that if you buy a registration number on a retention certificate, either through a dealer or other third party, you are only buying the rights to assign that number to your vehicle. The retention certificate will be made out to the seller, or the owner of the last vehicle it was on - not Regtransfers. You are, what is called, the 'nominee'. That means that the seller will allow you to use the number instead and he will give up his rights to it once you assign it to a car, but you must do it before the certificate expires.

As the nominee you cannot renew the certificate, it would be down to the seller to renew it for another year. Although it is possible to do it, it could cause all sorts of problems if anything goes wrong. Therefore, you should aim to transfer the number onto a vehicle that you own as soon as possible, in order to avoid losing the number if something goes wrong, or if the certificate is not renewed in time.

Being very interested in how all this works I decided to take all the paperwork and a photocopy of the tax disc to my local DVLA office in Wimbledon.

I was absolutely amazed how quickly and easily the transfer was done. I don't think I was in the office for more than five minutes - I didn't even have to queue! I went straight up to the counter, the lady took all of the paperwork, looked at it, bashed a few buttons on her computer and gave me a new tax disc showing **5 FBJ**. She also gave me a slip of paper so that I could get some new number plates made up.

They also put a rubber stamp on my original MoT test certificate and wrote the new registration number on it as well and gave that back to me. The lady then said that I would get my new log book in the post in a few weeks. That was it. I could not believe it was so easy. I could now go home and fit the new number plates to my car.



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the perfect eleven

X 1 is available exclusively from Regtransfers.co.uk at £500,000

