

The World of Personal Number Plates

Regtransfers

New Year 2007

.co.uk



Now, that's . . .

Paul Daniels!





The number plate bug

I wish to convey my gratitude to the devoted team at Regtransfers.co.uk in recognition of my appreciation for the efficient and prompt service rendered to me for the purchase of **D10 RDH**.

I am delighted with the plate, as I was with my previous purchases: **P777 BUG** (featured in The World of Personal Number Plates Volume 1 Issue 2) and **K6 LUV**

Lord Brett Reginald McLean
of Hastings

Who says I am too small or not famous enough to have my own personal number plate?

My name is **Dishen Comaren** and I am only 26 months old. I am the first born to my parents.

When I was 3 weeks old my dad bought me this number plate **D15HEN** as a gift.

I wish to thank the Regtransfers team who sold this number plate to my dad. In particular, I thank Mr Ian who provided an excellent service to my dad.

As I am not old enough to have my dream sports car, my mum is using the number plate in the meantime (as you can see, what an old lady's car it is!).

Guys, if you want to have your personal number plate just dial 01582 477333 and I am pretty

sure the team at Regtransfers will help you to find your perfect number plate.

You don't have to worry about the cost if you are under 16 - no bank account, no credit card, no driving licence but the privilege to request what we want. Your parents are here to pocket out the expenses. Ha, ha!

Dishen Comaren
(2 years, 2 months)



On display

I have owned a few cherished number plates but I did not think I would ever own the one displaying my initials, BS.

Thanks to your company and staff, this was done (within my budget) within a few weeks, with all the paperwork sent to me, and the plate is now displayed on my car.

Thanks once again.

Brian Smith
by email



What's the Story?

Do you have a story about number plates?

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

The R6 Crew

Please find attached pictures of my Yamaha R6 with the registration number **R6 CRU**, I thought they might be of interest for your magazine and possibly drum up some interest in the registration as you currently have it for sale on my behalf.

I wanted a cherished number for my bike and as my mate (who also

rides an R6) and I were known as 'The R6 Crew' to the other guys we go riding with, **R6 CRU** was the obvious choice.

The number often attracts positive comments at bike meets and I think it sets my bike out from the crowd.

Andy Earl
Porchester



Letters & emails

Write to:
The Editor
Regtransfers.co.uk
139 High Street South
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 3SS

or email
editorial@regtransfers.co.uk

House Keyes

I was going through some old magazines, when I noticed The World of Personal Number Plates, Volume 3, Issue 1 and read the article Namesake (**H6 YES**).

My name is Keyes, so my ears pricked up at this article, thinking that a named plate looked more attractive than just initials.

After looking around, I found **K22 YES**. I found a couple of single numbers but they were a bit expensive, so I thought of my house number which is 22.

My Subaru Legacy Estate has now got the registration number **K22 YES** and this was all down to reading your magazine.

G Keyes
by email



Bill 'N Jen

We are well known in Perth as just 'Bill 'n Jen'. Our conversion to personal number plates was purely by chance. In fact, we are both on record as saying that we would never have them.

We have been 'caravanetting' for around 40 years and have visited more than a dozen countries in Europe with our vans, and Canada and New Zealand with rented ones.

We were offered **L1 BNJ** originally but might have had to arrange a second mortgage! But as it was to go on our Motorhome, **L2 BNJ** (for 'us 2') seemed more appropriate.

Now we have **L2 BNJ**, **L3 BNJ** and **L4 BNJ** - prompting one friend to remark that we must have "mair siller (money) than sense"

Bill and Jen Fairweather, Perth

Out on a Lymm

I thought you might like to see my new plate. It's quite a head-turner in our local village!

John Hooper, Lymm, Cheshire



Taking Care of Business



The **commercial benefits** of distinctive number plates are now well-established.

With the UK's **largest selection** of quality registrations - and now celebrating 25 years' trading - **Regtransfers** has become the first choice of a wide range of businesses eager to find a **cost-effective** marketing solution.

We are, naturally, delighted to relate their experiences in this magazine. In an earlier issue, we featured **Pimlico Plumbers** and we are now pleased to bring the story up to date with the brand new article opposite >

A visit to our website at **www.regtransfers.co.uk** is certain to provide you with inspiration and ideas for the perfect registration to take care of **YOUR** business.

With stories and **video clips** you can see how businesses just like yours have gained **valuable prestige** from their distinctive numbers plates.

Remember, our friendly sales staff are on hand to help you until 11pm every evening - including weekends.



? Why not get YOUR company noticed with corporate number plates

Distinctive number plates:

- provide excellent promotional, marketing opportunities
- look great in press releases, newspaper articles, TV, etc.
- raise public awareness of your company
- help to create corporate identity
- are great fun items
- set your company apart from the rest
- are tax deductible
- provide proven investment potential

Here are just a few organisations who have used personal number plates to identify and promote their businesses >

- A Better Move **110 ADU**
- All Star Limousine Hire **A115 TAR**
- And So to Bed **CO51 BED**
- Cry Records **2 CRY**
- Gowing and Pursey **PUR 53Y**
- Fantastic Fireworks **5 NOV**
- Floors to Go **2 FTG**
- Independent Safety Advisors **S4 FTY**
- KMK Electricians **K13 KMK**
- Ladybird Photography **P777 BUG**
- Morrow Brothers Limited **1 KEG**
- New Dimension Exhibitions **WH05 NDE**
- Progressive Print Services **R55 PPS**
- Rack Storage Systems **DEX 10N**
- The Accessory People **2 TAP**
- Venmore Thomas & Jones **1 VTJ**

Plumbers' Posh Plates

The Pimlico Plumbers credit a part of their ongoing success to their vast collection of personalised number plates. With a growing collection of over thirty, it is hard to miss plates such as BOG 1, DRA 1N, B1 DET, LAV 1 and W4 TER.

This attention to detail together with the outstanding service they offer has culminated in a series of prestigious awards recognising their status as one of the best in the industry. Three times voted London's Top Plumbers, finalists in the H&V National Domestic Installer of the Year award and H&V Marketing Initiative of the Year Winners, to name just a few.



Charlie Mullins, Managing Director said, "For 25 years now, we have been fulfilling that pledge by employing the highest calibre of staff in every position. In return for the high standard of service we offer, we find that our customers not only use us again and again themselves, but recommend us to their friends and family."



The company's recent expansion into new 28,000 sq. ft. premises together with its fleet of Volkswagen vans almost doubling to 90 is proof that their philosophy of the 'customer always coming first' is the key to their success.

Pimlico Plumbers has carved a niche for itself by concentrating its efforts in an area of just 3 1/2 square miles of Central London, but one that contains some of the most expensive properties and historic buildings in the capital. This means that presenting the right image to customers, who expect to



Flushed with Success



One may be forgiven for thinking that plumbing is an industry within which the opportunities to achieve fame might be limited. One would, however, be demonstrably mistaken. London plumbing specialists Pimlico Plumbers have achieved a high, positive profile that would be the envy of many a business. Imaginative and proactive marketing have made the company's name familiar far beyond the limited circle of

customers and business partners that have had direct contact with them.

One of the most striking publicity tools exploited by Pimlico Plumbers is the outstanding collection of plumbing-related custom number plates that adorn their vans.

As long-standing, frequently returning customers of Regtransfers.co.uk, Charlie Mullins and his staff have developed a great eye for the best, most appropriate registrations. Consequently, their large fleet of vans is equipped with eye-catching registrations such as **B1 DET, LAV 1, F1 USH, W4 TER, DRA 1N, S1 NKS** and even **BOG 1!** An impressive collection, but that isn't the half of it: Pimlico own literally dozens more similarly themed registrations of the very highest quality.

Personalised numbers are so much a part of the company identity that employees regard it as a badge of honour to drive the vans bearing the best registrations. Those engineers who perform best in their work get the most striking plates, thus it is common for customers to request a specific engineer to do their work... quoting his van number plate by way of identification!

Pimlico's fantastic collection has also aided their wider publicity campaigns too. The plates generate such interest that they have been featured many times on television and radio, in newspapers - and, of course in the Regtransfers.co.uk magazine.

From the Regtransfers.co.uk point of view, Pimlico Plumbers are the perfect satisfied customer. They have the vision to see the business and marketing benefits of top quality number plates, and in promoting themselves so effectively they also promote our industry. Best of all, they keep coming back!

During a recent visit, Pimlico's MD, **Charlie Mullins**, credited Regtransfers.co.uk with a significant contribution to his company's success. Perhaps modesty should prevent us quoting him, but what Charlie said is such a clear indication of the promotional value of good private plates on business vehicles that we simply have to share it.

"We are London's most successful plumbing company, and a lot of that I put down to the recognition we have got from our vehicles with the number plates on.

"We've been dealing with Regtransfers.co.uk now for nearly 25 years, they've supplied a hell of a lot of number plates for us, and you can see the amount of publicity that we get. Celebrity customers that use us, in the paper, everybody seems to mention the vans, everybody mentions the number plates.

"It's our biggest form of advertisement, and hopefully we can continue to work with Regtransfers.co.uk for years to come. They have offered us a great service which has certainly got us, the company, to the position we are in today as the most known plumbing company in the world."

Photography: Stan Thompson



es



the very best service at standards, is essential. nective number plates pre ting touch. Charlie said, the way Registration Tra sale and transfer of our t ys with superb efficienc al search to the complet vant documentation. Th led a touch of recognitio ns and our customers are mmenting on them. We i uch fantastic publicity be ates. There is no doubt t ly spot us out and abou forget us either."





Now, that's

Magic!

Having been a Paul Daniels fan from a very young age, I'm excited that I'm finally going to meet him. I pull into his winding drive and can't believe his **MAG 1C** plate is right there in front of me. This is the stuff of number plate legend. I mentally tick it off my list of 'Things to do before I die'.

I park next to the Bentley Mulsanne alongside a vast green lawn with the River Thames beyond. A man appears from a glass-fronted house and strolls towards me. He is so recognisable it's almost like visiting an old friend.

Paul Daniels is Mister Magic. He is the most accomplished TV magician of our time. This along with his unique comedy style, ensured he was a hit with audiences the world over. The Paul Daniels Magic Show arrived on our TV screens in 1979. His tricks baffled and astounded us well into the 1990's. Truly a household name, he later hosted the quiz shows Odd One Out, Every Second Counts and Wipeout.

We stroll along the patio up to the seam of the river where Paul shows me his pride and joy - a motorised canoe he spends many pleasant hours in. He points out the part of the house that is built over the water. "It's deceptive isn't it?" he says, noticing my look of surprise. "The house looks smaller when you first arrive doesn't it?" That's not the

only illusion this house creates. We seem to be at the back of the house, but it's not entirely clear where the front is. In fact it doesn't look like a conventional house at all with its flat roofs. It's more like a big magic box from one of Paul's tricks. He goes on to tell us gleefully that the canoe is named 'The lovely Debbie McGee'. The lady herself waves to us from inside the house as we settle ourselves at the table on the patio.

Paul doesn't claim to have a great interest in private number plates, but when he was a civil servant in local government, some 44 years ago, he had the foresight to work out the number plate combination **MAG 1C**. "It was quite handy working there," he said, "I asked if it was for sale and who owned it. I even offered £1,000 for it. The answer was a definite no. They said they were not permitted to issue a plate out of sequence." Several years went by and when Paul had just started to make a name for himself as a magician, he was offered the plate on a Mini. He turned it down believing it couldn't possibly be genuine because he knew that the MAG series of plates had never been issued.

It wasn't until 1985 that a friend told Paul that **MAG 1C** was for sale again, this time on a Ferrari. "When I answered the advertisement in the Times, it was then that I discovered

the plate had indeed been issued - to a Scottish Councillor, who'd had it on a Mini! I went ahead and bought the plate with the Ferrari. The previous owner told me that he was so glad I was buying the car and plate because he was pig sick of people asking if it belonged to Paul Daniels."

In the twenty years since, **MAG 1C** has become a trademark for the

continued on page 16 . . .

More Magical Motor Marks

	ELF 15H £7,995
	G3 NEE £2,995
	MAG 164L £9,995
	MYS 71C £14,995
	TI2 0LL £7,995
	CAS 71E £14,995
	JUP 173R £8,995
	VI3 NUS £4,995
	RAB IIT £895

All registrations illustrated here are available exclusively from Regtransfers.co.uk

Paul Daniels brand. "It has certainly been good value for money in terms of publicity," says Paul, "although I do consider selling it from time to time. I have been offered fortunes for it because it doesn't just apply to magicians, **MAG 1C** has a very wide appeal."

Wouldn't he pass it on to his magician son Martin? "We've never

thought of that before. Only one of my sons is a magician, so I'm not sure it would really be fair." Paul has never considered having another number although plates do seem to have caught his family's imagination with his wife Debbie having **8 DEB** on her car and Martin with an MDZ number on his. "I suppose if I was to choose another plate it would have to be

my name, **PAU 1D**. I have often smiled at some of the combinations around but in truth I am really not bothered whether I have one or not."

It is people's reactions to seeing this **MAG 1C** number that concerns Paul sometimes, "It can be damn dangerous. I think that when I drive the Bentley I am more aware of other drivers and what they are up to than anyone else on the road. Normal family drivers will suddenly spot the plate and swerve out into the fast lane so that they can turn sideways to take pictures with their phones and cameras. Mad!"

At this point the lovely **Debbie McGee**, looking ageless as ever, comes to ask us if we would like a drink. Moments later she returns with a tray of tea and coffee before returning to her office.

Paul first became interested in magic when he was just 11 years old whilst on holiday with friends. He read a book called *How to Entertain at Parties* and was particularly taken with the magic card tricks it explained. "From that moment, I can safely say that all I ever wanted to do in life was to become a professional magician." Soon, the young Paul was entertaining at the homes of friends and family, then at parties and youth clubs. He left school at 16 and went straight into the Civil Service as a junior clerk and later as an internal auditor. He continued the magic shows in his spare time when he also began to develop his own tricks and techniques.

At 18, he was called for National Service and was sent to Hong Kong



Paul sells some rare back issues of this magazine to Regtransfers' Marketing Manager, Len Stout. (Shouldn't this have been the other way round! - Ed)

Paul's Potted Personal Past

Paul Daniels is one of the most accomplished magicians in the world, and certainly one of the most exciting. Add to that a unique comedy style and you have a complete entertainer.

His fame and achievements are not confined to the UK. The USA, Canada, New Zealand, Germany, Spain, and Japan have all recognised him as a world class entertainer. His numerous achievements include starring in his own hugely successful West End theatre show, headlining in Las Vegas and Broadway, and performing more unique magic on TV than any other magician in history.

From the moment he burst onto the ITV network his magic shows topped the ratings. A recent book on TV facts calls him the most successful TV magician of the 20th century. His creative genius has enabled him to produce consistently stunning shows, unrivalled in spectacle and covering the whole world of entertainment magic, from small, 'close-up' effects, to enormous outside broadcast illusions.

In 1983 Paul was presented with the prestigious Magician of the Year award by the Hollywood Academy of Magical Arts before a star-studded audience in Los Angeles. It

was a tremendous achievement for Paul, and he was the first magician from outside the USA to receive the award.

In 1985 his exciting TV special, *Paul Daniel's Easter Magic Show* was awarded the coveted Golden Rose of Montreaux Award. This was followed by the Variety Club of Great Britain staging a special show business luncheon in Paul's honour at the Dorchester Hotel in London, televised by the BBC.

His TV career has not been limited to performing magic. As a presenter, he has hosted some of the most enjoyable game shows on TV. *Odd One Out*, *Every Second Counts* and the highly rated *Wipe Out* have all had great success in the battle for viewers. There was also the wonderful *Wizbit* children's series, which featured a world of magic and wonder for the younger viewer.

Always in demand as a guest on talk-shows, Paul's vibrant personality and love for magic make for a fascinating viewing, and his endless supply of stories and anecdotes from a lifetime in show-business, make for riveting viewing.

Paul has acted in the West End in Moliere's *The School for Wives*. He also enjoys getting

involved with film makers and has appeared in a few short films just for the fun of it. Recently he was in a local production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

on active duty where he spent part of his time entertaining the British and American servicemen.

After demobilisation, Paul decided to leave his secure Civil Service post to manage his parents grocery business. "It was so successful that I was soon able to buy my own shop. But it meant that I was working harder than ever. In the evenings I was entertaining with my

magic act in working men's clubs. I had a gruelling schedule of up to three 45-minute slots every night." It was while in one of these clubs in Bradford, that Paul's most famous catchphrase "You'll like it, not a lot, but you'll like it," came about. "A man called out to me 'I don't like your suit,' so I replied, 'Oh, well I like yours, not a lot, but I like it.' It became the hook for what we call a

running gag. I'd go back to same man every now and again throughout the show and say, 'you'll like this, not a lot, but you'll like it.' I was known all over the north of England for saying this long before I became famous."

Paul developed his showman's patter according to comments his audiences made. "I'd stay in the toilets after the shows to listen to



"It has certainly been good value for money in terms of publicity"

what people didn't like about my performance. I even got my girlfriends at the time to do the same. I treated my performances very much as a business."

Paul quickly learnt from the criticism he overheard, adjusting the way he presented his show. "I learnt not only by listening but by observation. I lived by the quote 'if we could see ourselves as others see us'. I did just that, I looked at myself to see what I could use to my advantage - I wasn't tall or suave like Bruce Forsyth for instance, he was king at the time, the top entertainer. I knew I would look all wrong if I tried to be like him. I read lots and lots of

comedy and worked on developing my own style. But trying to combine two successful jobs almost killed me. I had to make a choice. Luckily the decision was made for me when I landed a summer season at Newquay. I seized my chance and moved into showbusiness professionally."

In 1970 Paul was given another big break. He made his television debut on the talent show *Opportunity Knocks*. Although Paul came second, television executive Johnny Hamp spotted him and offered him a slot on Granada's popular TV show *The Wheeltappers and Shunters Club*. This proved to be

the launching pad Paul had been waiting for.

So how does he feel about TV shows where the magicians reveal their secrets?

"They don't bother me. It only annoys the amateurs, not the professional magician. You see I know 15 different ways to cut a woman in half - these programs only ever show one. I bought a trick when I was young and could not get any entertainment out of it, even though I obviously knew how it worked. Then I saw a man perform the same trick and he got a fantastic reaction from the audience. At that

moment I realised that the secret is never in the trick, it's always in the performer."

These days Paul is interested in developing businesses, from internet marketing to The Paul Daniels Magic Shop. For up and coming magicians he has written a complete masterclass course in magic called *How to Make Money by Magic*. In 2003 he went on an extensive *How to Make Money by Magic* tour of Australia, USA and the UK. "Unlike traditional magic lectures, I focused on how to use your existing knowledge of magic to earn money. The emphasis was on the business aspect of show-business. We've made the highlights of the tour available on DVD." Paul has a special 'Magician's area' on his website full of vital tips for budding and performing magicians.

This year Paul has worked in Los Angeles and Las Vegas, but he and the lovely Debbie McGee do still make the occasional television appearances, particularly on reality TV shows such as **Louis Theroux's** *Weird Weekends* and *The Farm*.

As far as number plates goes, he says that if he does decide to look for another plate he will certainly have a flick through the Regtransfers magazine, especially now he's appeared in it! Before I go, I ask him if he would mind signing the ace of spades playing card for my thirteen year old son. "Goodness me, you must have

been having babies as a child" he says, flattering me by thinking I don't look old enough. I laugh for the umpteenth time - I've really enjoyed being entertained for the past couple of hours - meeting the man himself has not shattered any of my childhood illusions.

Debbie has her own agency which deals not only with models, but also with casting agents who are seeking actors of all ages.

www.debbiemcgee.co.uk



Interview by Ruby Speechley

Photography by Len Stout

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www.pauldaniels.co.uk

www.pauldanielsmagicshop.com



Paul and writer Ruby Speechley. 'Canoeing' by the canoe!

Sharman Shmels a Rat!

Sharman Schiffer has just published the story of her life with a notorious womaniser and pimp. Here, she tells the story behind the book: *Shmel the Rat*.

Each of the 16 chapters in this 232-page, easy-read roller-coaster, represents a year of living with this rat, starting with how we first met on a blind date.

I am now divorced and want to be the ambassador for all those ladies out there who are in a similar situation but just cannot break away. However difficult it might be, there is a light at the end of that very dark tunnel. I know, I am the living proof.

I have given many after lunch and dinner speeches all over the country, to all-ladies audiences on the subject of relationships and the response has been amazing.

I have been featured in both the local and national press and on the radio with Vanessa Feltz and Anna Raeburn.

I commissioned a professional cartoonist and, between us, we created a caricature that depicts *Shmel the Rat*. The potential for the book and this character is endless. We have made prototype dolls, mugs, note pads, divorce cards, computer rat mats etc. In fact anything that needs a logo, the Rat will assist.

Many people have told me that this true life story would make a brilliant film or TV play. We shall see.

It is very important for any business to maximise its advertising and this is why I contacted

Regtransfers.co.uk. I was welcomed by one of your very knowledgeable sales negotiators who, with his expertise, guided me



Shmel the Rat!



in the purchase of a number plate that would benefit from my book.

He came up with the number **MY04 RAT**. The **04** being the year that I started writing the book.

Your correspondence is an example of how a company should operate. I am so very pleased with the service and over the moon with my plate. So much so, that I have now given Regtransfers my private number **A20 SHA** to sell for me.

MY04 RAT causes such a stir every time I hit the road and this is exactly what I wanted. And I didn't stop with the plate: I have had magnetic plaques made, which grace the bonnet and two front doors of my car.

My family and friends were just so taken aback by this whole concept, that they were amazed to see something very positive come out of

something very negative. I will certainly recommend you to anyone that needs a personalised number plate.

You have all heard of Roland Rat. Well, make way for *Shmel the Rat*.



Further details can be found on Sharma's website at www.shmeltherat.com

Magnetic signs by Sign-a-rama, Brighton
email: brighton@signarama.co.uk
Telephone Jeff on: 01273 871521

The third in a series of specially commissioned articles for
The World of Personal Number Plates
from the respected newspaper
columnist and TV presenter

Jason's Heavy Metal Heroes

For the same price as an 'ordinary' new car you could be driving the world's automotive aristocracy thanks to the ravages of depreciation. With most cars losing around half their value in the first three years of life there has never been a better time to pick up a tasty motor. So what are you waiting for? Check out my list of 'heavy metal heroes', the best luxury cars on a budget, get yourself a private plate and you'll soon have the neighbours thinking you've won the lottery. You'll never want to buy a new car again!

Up to £25,000

A top spec Vauxhall Signum diesel will set you back around £25,000 but for the same money you could be behind the wheel of one of Germany's best, a used Mercedes Benz S-Class. All S-Class models look pretty much the same to the untrained eye so to the innocent onlooker you could be driving a £70,000 5.0 litre V8 or a £45,000 straight six. Either way it's the bonnet on the badge that cuts the mustard, the three pointed star is the universal symbol for success and you'll be welcomed at all the best locations.

Go for one with the optional satellite navigation, add some decent wheels and you'll not only look a million dollars you'll feel it as well. No worries on spec the more recent models all come with electric seats, climate control and

leather upholstery so you will never feel hard done by.

The diesel S320 is my pick of the bunch with 204bhp on tap it has a useful turn of speed whilst you'll still top 30mpg in mixed motoring.

The one to buy - Mercedes Benz S320CDi 2002 '52' with 40,000 miles. Cost new £47,000
Value today £23,000 - £25,000



Mercedes Benz S320CDi

Up to £20,000

Fords used to be cheap but a new Mondeo 2.2TDCi can tip the scales at nearly twenty grand and in three years time you'll be lucky to get £8,000. So why not spend that money a little more creatively with a BMW 7-Series? Pretty it ain't but there's no denying that a second hand BMW 7-Series is a big impact car. Pull up in the Mondeo and you look like a middle manager, rock up in the Beemer and you look like the chairman.

I'm not a big fan of the horrendously fiddly to use i-Drive system that BMW fit to the 7-Series but in every other respect it's an impressive piece of kit and all the models have a decent turn of speed.

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If you fancy the big Beemer then you are best off larding it, get one with big alloys and window tints for the full effect. The 6 cylinder models may be smooth but nothing beats the grunt of the 4.5 litre V8. With 333bhp on tap the 745i will give sports car owners a few shocks and will pull like a train up to its artificially limited 155mph top speed, just be prepared for frequent petrol station visits.

The one to buy – BMW 745i 2002 '02' with 70,000 miles.
Cost new £56,300
Value today £18,000 - £20,000



BMW 745i

Up to £15,000

A brand new Skoda Octavia will set you back £15,000 but I'm not interested in that when you can have a 360bhp Audi S8 for the same money. The S8 is the high performance version of the all ready quick A8 4.2 quattro. Sat on meaty 18" rims the S8 offers fantastic build quality, a space age all aluminium body shell and the benefits of all wheel drive technology.

Rumour has it that Audi made a loss on every A8 they ever built as the cost of production far outstripped the prices they could charge for them. Either way their obsession with building the ultimate luxury saloon car is good news for used car buyers as second hand examples often turn up looking as good as new.

Favourite colours are black or silver, both of which suit the car, but be fussy about the cars service history and make sure the car has not been involved in an accident – the aluminium body work is difficult and expensive to repair and should only be carried out by a specialist dealer, something that can be expensive. Early 3.7 V8's may look like good value but the lack of Quattro four wheel drive removes one of the cars best features.

The one to buy - Audi A8 S8 quattro 2001 '51' with 60,000 miles.
Cost new £54,110
Value today £13,000 - £15,000

Up to £10,000

Ten grand on a new car doesn't get you very much, a Corsa diesel to be precise, and while I'm not saying



Audi A8 S8

that second hand luxury cars are for everyone when they get down to this price they have to be worth a closer look.

The Lexus LS was Japan's first real foray into the world of luxury saloon cars and overnight won many loyal customers. What the Lexus lacked was a distinctive face but that's unlikely to worry many owners as they waft down the motorway in a virtually silent cabin.

Being Japanese the Lexus has reliability that shames its German competitors and the rather neutral styling has meant that through its evolution the early cars haven't aged too badly. Get one with the fantastic Lexus satellite navigation system and you will swear you are sat in a brand new car; the system is still yet to be bettered by modern competitors. The 4.0 litre V8 is no slouch either with 260 willing horse power under the bonnet but the overly light power steering is unlikely to inspire you to push on at pace.

The one to buy - Lexus LS 1999 'T' with 70,000 miles.
Cost new £49,299
Value today £9,000 - £10,000



Lexus LS

Up to £5,000

You'll struggle to get any new car for five grand, the KIA Picanto super mini is about the closest at £5,300, but heavy metal heroes still abound at this price. Pick of the crop is the Jaguar XJ saloon. Introduced in 1997 the XJ8 model was a huge leap forward from the visually

similar X300 model with new V8 engines and up-rated interiors.

Classic Jag styling gives these cars a low, sleek, elegant look that is the epitome of good taste. But don't be fooled into thinking that these cars are musty, dusty old man's cars, the 3.2 V8 produces 240bhp and the 4.0 litre 290bhp. There's even a supercharged version with 370bhp to play with, that's more power than a new Porsche 911!

Since the introduction of the new XJ model in March 2003 values on these previous generation cars have been gently drifting down to their current level and with virtually no more money to lose your depreciation is going to be negligible. On the down side you have to put fuel in, about a gallon every 20 miles, and you'll have to replace tyres and brakes fairly frequently.

But take it from me, there's no better feeling in the world than slipping behind the wheel of a V8 Jaguar, prodding the throttle and rapidly disappearing, towards the horizon, safe in the knowledge that the car cost you less than the cheapest new car in the UK.

The one to buy - Jaguar XJ8 4.0 Sovereign LWB 1998 'R' with 150,000 miles. Cost new £46,000
Value today £4,000 - £5,000



Jaguar XJ8 4.0 Sovereign LWB

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 Sky's *Men and Motors* channel.

www.usedcarroadshow.co.uk

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.



A dog's life!

Tia was *Rottweiler Personality of the Year (The Kirt Memorial Cup)* 1999, 2000, 2001 & 2004 and was shortlisted for the Golden Bonio Awards, 2003. She was *Daily Mail Dog of the Year, Gold Medallist award*, 2004.

Because of Tia's talent and love for performing, she was available for T.V. and film work. I was her trainer and handler.

Some of Tia's T.V. appearances include: *London Today/Tonight; Rolf's Amazing World of Animals; Days Like These; Central News; Mad About Pets; Lock Stock; Black Books; Beast; Los, Dos, Bros;*

The Grimleys; Midsomer Murders; Doc Martin and The Legend of the Cloutie (film with Martin Clunes); Death by Pets & Coronation Street.

Tia's story of how she saved my life has just been published in a book called *Dogs are Smarter than Jack* (95 amazing true stories about dogs), published by Smarter than Jack, a subsidiary of Avocado Press.

Every time I look at my **TIA 96** number plate, I quietly do so with pride, as memories gently tug at the heart-strings. I think what a special gift it was, and privilege, to have owned such a wonderful and talented dog.

In 2005, I presented *The Tia Bowl* to the Rottweiler Club, in loving memory of Tia, to be awarded annually for *Rottweiler Personality of the Year*. It replaces the Kirt Memorial Cup, which Tia won four times previously and I now have for keeps.

Finally, most sincerely, I give a huge "thank you" to Regtransfers.co.uk for dealing with us not only in such a warm and friendly manner, and so very promptly, during the transaction and the transfer of my number plate **TIA 96**, but also for giving me this special opportunity to share my beloved Tia one more time.

Amanda Hawes
by email



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Cabbie Dave Packer's registration, P154 CAB, simply means P for Packer, 154 is his taxi registration number and CAB is self-explanatory.

Observing the thousands of index marks available in the Regtransfers.co.uk magazine, I wondered how many owners of these marks know the area where they were originally issued, a subject that has interested me for over forty years.

Living in The Isle of Man, I noticed, at an early age, that all licence plates incorporated the letters **MN**, with or without a prefix. But it was years later that my interest in index marks really started.

Moving around the UK with my parents, to various RAF bases, we arrived in Huntingdon in the mid-sixties, where I resumed my train-spotting hobby. My colleagues also had publications about car numbers and explained that **EW** was the local index for Huntingdonshire. I realised that the majority of vehicles in the area had this mark.

After learning the neighbouring indices of Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire, my interest was born.

We then moved to North-East Scotland and, whilst waiting outside Aberdeen railway station for the RAF staff car to convey us to our

Dave Packs 'em In

new home in Peterhead (officers' perks, old boy!), I was eagerly spotting dozens of **RS** and **RG** registrations, which were issued to the city. Driving north to Peterhead, the county indices **SA** and **AV** became more numerous.

At this time a decision was made to learn all the indices printed in the AA book, so I have now committed the 600 original index marks to memory.

In 1974, new legislation substituted 180 local authority motor taxation offices with 81 local vehicle licensing offices, resulting in the re-allocation of some index marks. The majority remained, but others were transferred to other locations. For example, **AA** (Hampshire) went to Salisbury and **AG** (Ayrshire) to Hull.

Operating as a Llandudno licensed taxi proprietor, my travels throughout the UK are made more interesting by matching registration plates with the area that I am travelling through. Even without viewing destination or county signs, I am confident I could pinpoint my position to within 50 miles.

In my opinion, the most attractive plate design is that issued by the self-governing Isle of Man. Some years ago a completely new design was issued for Manx registered vehicles, with similar dimensions to those of the UK-style plates. The main differences are, the smaller characters (separated by mandatory hyphens between the letters and numbers), a pillar box red panel situated on the extreme left, displaying the IOM national symbol, the trieske (The 3 Legs of Man) and beneath it, the letters **GBM**. A choice of place name e.g. Isle of Man, Ellan Vannin or Mannin, can be inserted above the characters to display national identity.

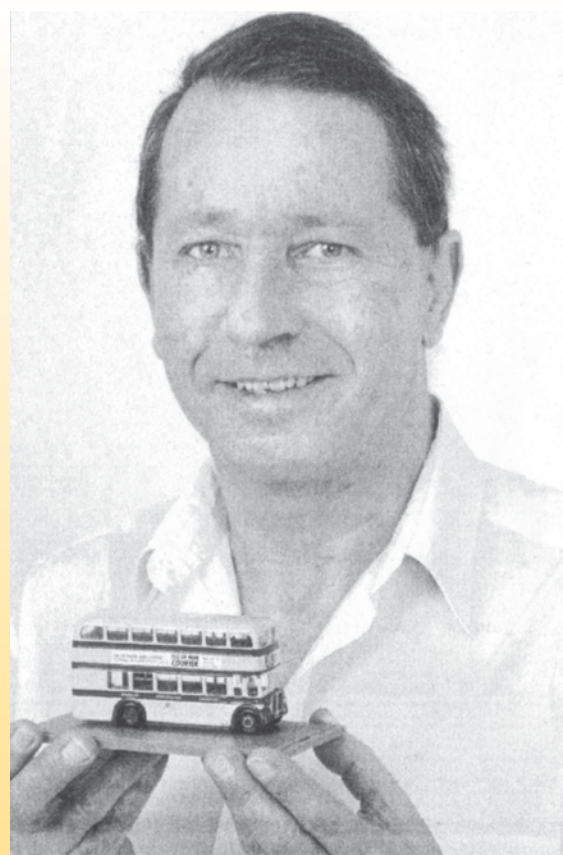
New legislation, in April 2004, allowed larger characters and the recently introduced UK plate design was authorised for Manx registered

vehicles. Hyphens became mandatory on any plate after September 2004. It is interesting that, white or silver characters on a black plate are still legal on the Island, but only vehicles manufactured before 1 September 1990.



As all Manx plates have a combination of **MN** or **MAN**, personal plates do not exist, although Island resident comedian Norman Wisdom did possess **NMN 16** on his vehicle.

Dave Packer
Llandudno



Dave pictured here with one of his collection of over 60 model buses >



LETTERS EXTRA

Email YOUR story and photos to:
editorial@regtransfers.co.uk

W44 EEM

Mad about plates?

Do you have a story about
number plates?

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

I saw a number plate, which had my
name on it - **W45 EEM** but it was sold.

Then I found **W44 EEM** which was the
closest to my personalised name.
I bought it I had put it on my mum's car
because I was only 16 at the time.

My friends think it's good so I told them
about Regtransfers and now they are all

looking for the personalised
number plates.

I like the plate because it's my own
and no one else has my plate. It's also
a good investment. Many thanks.

Waseem Aslam
Fife, Scotland

How much is a Cos worth?

It was nice talking to Regtransfers.co.uk's
Marketing Manager, Len Stout, at the
recent Registration Numbers Rally at
Woburn Abbey. As discussed I have
noted some details regarding the
numbers plates that my partner and I
own.

My love for Ford Cars started in the
1960's with a Lotus Cortina and a
1600E, then into the 1970's with an
Escort 1300E and in the 1980's I had an
XR3, RS Turbo and Cosworth cars.

Since the early 1990's I have had a RS
500 Sierra Cosworth which was one of
the last 100 ever built by Aston Martin -
Tickford- Bedworth. Also in the early
1990's I acquired the number plate
500 COS, which has been registered on
my Cosworth ever since that time.

The photo was taken at the recent
Registration Numbers Rally at
which I won first prize in the section.

I have also been a member of the Ford
RS Owners Club for the last 18 years
and have been to many of their shows
with my cars.

The very first number plate that I bought
was from a dealer in the 1980's, the
number was **RC 1999**. This is now
currently being held on retention.

The last number plate I bought for
myself was **300 ROY** which is currently
on my Mitsubishi Shogun Warrior.

My partner, Dee, bought herself a new
Ford KA in 2002, I then purchased the
number plate **V50 DEE** for her. While
surfing the number plate web sites, we

then discovered the number **KA02 DEE**
from your web site, which she now has
on the car and **V50 DEE** is being held
on retention.

Roy Cuthbert
Enfield Middlesex





Keeping it in the family

Chris Carey, from Eastleigh in Hampshire, wanted to find a plate that related to his name and which he could pass down through the family.

"I was looking for a sort of heirloom, I suppose. After weeks of thought I had settled for **CAR 3Y**. It looked the part and nothing had to be moved or changed to recognise my name."

After some investigation he discovered that DVLA had not released the plate yet. So, he registered with several cherished number companies and awaited a response. Three years went by and he had given up on the idea and bought one with his initials **CPC 766**.



"Then, out of the blue, I had a text from **Regtransfers.co.uk** to say they had the plate and to give them a call. I phoned straight away and spoke to a friendly and polite chap called **Chris Dixon**. We quickly agreed a price and I paid a deposit. Two weeks later I had a call from Chris to say the plate was in my name. I paid the balance over the phone and the certificate was posted out to me the next day. I went straight to the VRO and put the plate on my car. I have since sold **CPC 766** now that I have my ultimate plate."

Chris has also purchased **N3 SXX** (Nes XX) for my fiancée Vanessa. I gave that to her on Valentine's day. She says it's a day now that she will never forget and is reminded of it every time she drives her car."

Five-year-old son Joshua C Carey has **JC04 REY** for when he's old enough to drive. "We have found that the plates go up in value and are a good investment, so we are seeking plates for all our kids. They give the car that personal touch and can also bring back fond memories."

The couple also have **6040 WJ** which hides the age of their car transporter and is also a little investment for the future.

"Regtransfers have provided me with a first-class service and I would recommend them to anyone who is considering purchasing a cherished number in the near future. Keep up the good work!"



What's the Story?

Do you have a story about number plates?

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

Vernon Wood recalls half a century of private vehicle ownership, with many marques (and sadly, rare plates) that no longer exist . . . Unless you know otherwise?

Like many drivers in their seventies, I have owned a number of motor cars which, had they survived, would have commanded premium prices as veterans of a bygone age, treasured for uniqueness, rarity or even for sheer cussed eccentricity. My own tally of ownerships since passing my test in 1954 is 34, and as you might expect, the earlier ones are the most interesting.

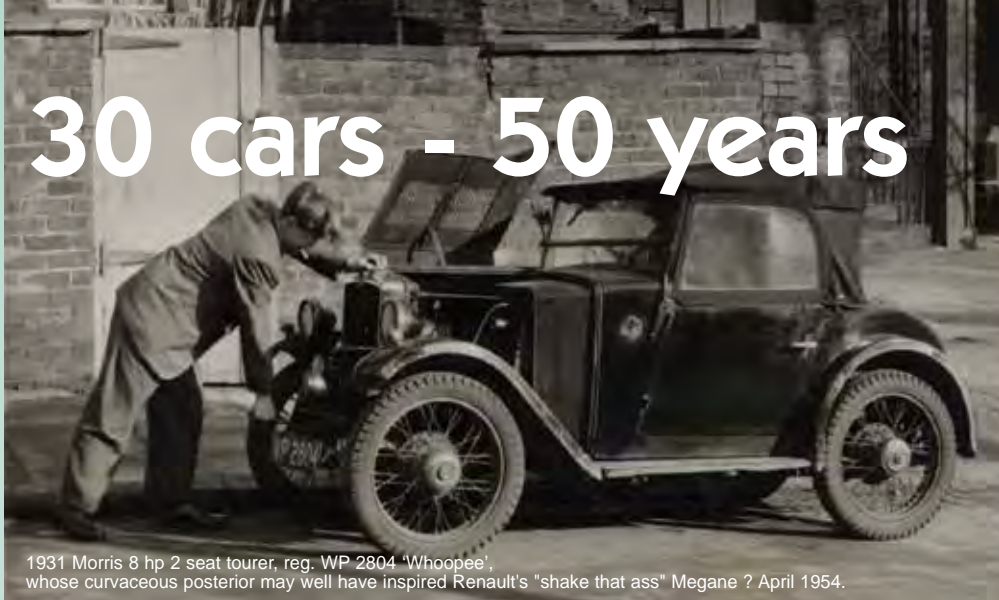
From the viewpoint of a carplate *number-nutter*, even more intriguing are the registrations that went with the cars, and I can only shudder to think of the small fortune that has slipped through my fingers in the past half century as I sold both car and plate for a few paltry quid.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing they say, but for my money foresight is a more valuable attribute, which, (had I been blessed with it in relation to 'old bangers'), might have funded the annuity of which my Equitable Life pension plan promised so very much, but delivered so very little.

Whoopee

My first car was built the year I was born, and came into my possession 23 years later. It was a pert little Morris Minor 2 seat ragtop tourer (sporting hand-knitted seat covers!), with spare wheel mounted on a delightfully curved rump which Angelina Jolie might envy. 'Whoopee' as she became affectionately known (**WP 2804**), was purchased for £45 jointly with my parents. (They were anxious to divert my petrolhead aspirations away from the Panther 250cc OHV motorbike I had secretively acquired by swapping a camera worth £5, without parental approval). The bike had originally emerged from the Phelon and Moore factory at nearby Cleckheaton in 1937 as a gleaming sample of 2-wheel technology, but was now a rusty wreck which I rebuilt rather badly into something of a death-trap. I recall having to wear fishermen's waders to ward off the oilspray that

30 cars - 50 years



1931 Morris 8 hp 2 seat tourer, reg. WP 2804 'Whoopee', whose curvaceous posterior may well have inspired Renault's "shake that ass" Megane ? April 1954.

emerged from the engine's valvagear at speeds over 20 mph.

I sold it 2 years later for £10, the rebuild having cost £25. My only memory of the registration was the letters VNW, which today, would have been an ideal initialised plate for myself and wife. *C'est la vie*.

'Whoopee' was bought subsequent to my disastrous failure at my first driving test, so that I could get in much more sorely needed practice before the re-take.

Six point turn

The first test had followed a fivers-worth of six, 30 minute driving lessons, and comprised a 15 minute tootle along the back streets around Headingley Cricket Ground before ending rather prematurely and ignominiously halfway through what was shaping up to be a six point turn. It seemed that an elderly, bulbous, sluggish, dual-controlled Morris Oxford fuelled on kangaroo juice was not a suitable car in which to learn to drive, or indeed, hope to pass a driving test.

The qualified driver who later accompanied me on my practice runs in 'Whoopee' was a neighbourly bus driver, a jovial chap whose 6' 3", 18 stone body made a dramatic contrast to that of myself as a 5' 6" stripling of 10 stone, as we sat side by side in a rakishly lopsided 2 seat Minor, evoking memories of Laurel and Hardy motoring classics.

Incongruous it may have been, but it gave me the road sense and practice I

needed as we chugged around the pre-motorway roads of West Yorkshire, hood down, myself frantically hand-signalling at every junction, and rarely putting in a burst of speed up to 45 mph...only providing it was downhill with a following wind.

Other fond memories of 'Whoopee' include the over-ambitious drive from Leeds to Edinburgh for my annual RAF Reserve training course, undertaken the day after I had (only just) passed my driving test in Huddersfield. The adventure ended a few days later when I had to abandon the car on a weekend run to Loch Lomond, by whose bonnie banks 'Whoopee' just whimpered and gave up the ghost with a smoking, red-hot differential casing. How was I to know that I should pump grease into the back axle every 1000 miles? She was towed into Helensburgh on the Clyde, repaired and collected by myself two weeks later for £27.00...plus bus fare from Leeds of 30 shillings. 'Whoopee' was sold in 1954 to a student for £35, and was last seen some 5 years later looking rather forlorn in the forecourt of a garage at Aberford on the old Great North Road.

Today, not only has 'Whoopee' disappeared, but also the garage and indeed, the old A1 road itself at that point, replaced by eight thundering lanes of the recently extended M1 motorway.

She was followed by another joint family venture in the form of **KUM 480**, a gunmetal grey 1947 Vauxhall 10 which set us back £330, a prodigious sum in those days virtually my annual gross income.

It was only financed by splitting the purchase and running costs 3 ways with my parents on the understanding that every weekend would include a trip to coast or country, and I would provide a family taxi service with 24/7 availability. A fair deal I reckon. The car was sold 18 months later for £250, and the proceeds split three ways to help fund my move from home to digs in Newcastle, where I moved to a new job with a Tyneside advertising agency.

Minnie the Minx

As my next car had to be financed solely by myself, I had to revert to pre-war vintage, so I lashed out £85 on a 1936 Hillman Minx 10, a battleship grey,



1934 Morris 10/4 aluminium-bodied special coachwork model GR 4, prior to fitting Lucas P100 headlamps from a Jaguar SS100. Winter 1959.



1947 Vauxhall saloon reg. KUM 480 (virtually identical to 1939 pre-war model), with rare metallic silver paintwork, pictured alongside the Ilkley-Skipton road, West Yorkshire, May 1956.

4-seat drophead coupe with 35,000 miles on the clock and no - I didn't believe that of a 21 year old car either.

'Minnie' was registered in Middlesbrough as **XG 4070**. She boasted novel Bendix cable braking which tended to throw the car into a spin when driving forward, and to be totally ineffective in reverse. This feature I discovered when reversing down the ramp to board the Isle of Wight ferry, guided only by the warning shouts of nearby passengers and the terrified screams of my passengers.

My forthcoming marriage enforced the sale of 'Minnie', which had undergone a hand repainting job in a Jesmond back street, and where the slow-drying paint had acquired a surface coating of grit, the spinoff by-product of a mini-tornado which circled the area for an hour or so. I was quite chuffed to get £65 for it, which bought one rug, two carpets and a 3-piece suite for our home at Whickham, overlooking the Tyne valley.

It was a couple of years before we could afford to rejoin the ranks of what was then, the motorised minority. Our auction choice of a sombre black 1939 Morris 10 saloon for £35 was hurriedly reversed after we discovered on a run to the Cheviots that it had consumed 3 pints of oil on a 100 mile trip, laying a blue-black haze of Castrol across the Northumbrian countryside. Our seven day ownership had cost £5, the experience being so briefly traumatic that I never stopped to record the registration number or enquire about its ultimate destiny - the knacker's yard would be most appropriate.

Granfer

Licking our wounds we next fell for an even older 1934 Morris 10/4 in a fetching green/black duotone for £45. It was a special bodied 4 door saloon with custom built aluminium coachwork, leather seats and a horizontally split, opening windscreen - a very distinguished looking elderly gentleman of a car whom we promptly named 'GRANFER', not least because of the unique registration **GR 4**. 'Granfer' served us very well for almost two years, transporting us up and down the A1 between our new home in Newcastle and our friends and family in West Yorkshire. This was shortly after the Suez crisis when petrol rationing was re-introduced, so we had to conserve our petrol coupons (supplemented by a couple of black market tanks full) for the

bi-monthly visits.

It was during the winter of 1958 that we discovered Granfer's eyesight was failing, so I replaced the individual headlights with a pair of Lucas P100 units of 12" diameter - huge searchlights cannibalised from a wrecked 1938 Jaguar SS100. Regretfully, the car's dynamo was not up to the job, providing a mere glow-worm of light for those after dark A1 trips, made all the more hazardous in wet, wintry conditions by a single, 6" windscreen wiper that swept spasmodically. It had to be assisted by hand operation in hard-driving rain, so I suppose we were something of an accident waiting to happen, but happily we survived.

However, Granfer regretfully underwent a major mechanical catastrophe on one of our visits to Yorkshire. Driving uphill at near maximum revs (probably around 2000 rpm in this venerable side valve engine) a cacophonous metal-to-metal clatter announced the appearance of a piston rod as it punched its way out of the side of the engine. A write-off, no less.

Mad Medley of Morley

I placed the car into the care of a Mr Frank Medley, a self employed car service engineer and a man whose eccentricity had led to his featuring in the national newspapers some years earlier. (It seems that following Frank's major overhaul of a Rolls Royce, the local customer - now fallen into dire financial straits - had been unable to pay in cash and had settled his bill in

kind by passing on his top hat and tails, once worn at Ascot).

For years afterwards, Frank wore the toff's togs in lieu of overalls, winning a name for excellent work, if oddball appearance. So Frank took control of our crisis, towing Granfer into his lock-up workshop, and started to scour Yorkshire scrapyards for a 25 year old 10/4 engine, whilst we returned to Newcastle by bus. About three weeks later Frank called me to say he had located a suitable Morris engine twenty miles away, and that he'd already tested, removed, and transported it to his workshop, and given Granfer a lifesaving heart transplant. His bill for the entire operation was an unbelievable £10, so I shall never forget Frank as the disarmingly odd philanthropic Gentleman Engineer - and you don't find many of those in today's car care establishments.

This incident reminds me of a similar experience with the Hillman some years earlier when, following a severe blizzard at Christmas 1954 at Buckden in Wharfedale, I had been unable to start the car. I phoned a motor engineer at Kettlewell, some seven miles down the dale, who drove up to check over the car, returned to his garage to pick up a replacement top water hose, came back to Buckden and fitted it, cajoled the engine back into life and then asked only ten shillings (50p) for his time, expenses, parts and skill....and this was on Boxing Day. They don't make them like Frank of Morley and Walter of Kettlewell any more.

Eventually, Granfer was sold to a colleague for £10 (he was even more impecunious than myself), who managed to squeeze a few more miles and months out of Granfer before 'old faithful' was finally laid to rest in what I like to think of as a Motor Organ Exchange Facility, in effect, a scrapyard at Hebburn on Tyne. His aluminium body may well now be reconstituted as a Transatlantic superjet, or more likely as a set of pans. R.I.P.

Posh Pitheap

We celebrated the start of the Sixties with an Austin A35 van which was 6 months old, had 6k on the clock and at £365 cost £60 less than its brand new OTR price - a posh purchase by the

1936 Hillman 10 four-seat tourer XG 4070, taking a much deserved breather before assaulting the 1700 ft climb over the Kirkstone Pass to Ullswater in Cumbria. ,May 1957.





1960 Austin A35 van reg. **PTY 750** on "The road to the Isles" (perhaps the safest place for pregnant lady learner drivers?). In effect, a windowless 'Countryman' estate car, with added rear seats. Autumn 1960.

standards of our previous vehicles. Locally registered as **PTY 750** and bought from a miner in Pity Me, Co Durham she was christened 'Pitheap', for obvious reasons, but also because we could never totally eliminate the tiny fragments of coal which had collected in every nook and cranny of the interior. I added a home made, folding bench seat in the back, so, like many A35 vans of that era it became a windowless Austin 'Countryman' estate car, thereby saving the 25% Purchase Tax which applied to passenger cars.

Tax Penalty

As a penalty for this tax concession, officialdom had imposed a speed limit on vans of 40 mph, so in effect we were banned by law from driving in top gear on any road, including the fast new dual carriageway trunk roads being introduced. This diktat was perhaps a forerunner of today's highway situation, where unrealistic speed restrictions are indiscriminately imposed on many major routes, enforced by photo-technology reminiscent of George Orwell's Big Brother in '1984'.

It also serves as a reminder of the bureaucratic DVLA rationale which encouraged (indeed exploited) the personal and cherished car registration plate market, only - with the complicity of Government - to impose petty and vindictive restrictions on the manner in which they are displayed. Does anyone really believe, for instance, that 'COMIC' is less memorable or identifiable than 'COM 1C' as DVLA and police advisers claim? I'm sure Jimmy Tarbuck doesn't, nor does any reasonable person whose thinking process is unaffected by the distortions of the Whitehall mindset.

I taught my wife to drive in the A35, mostly along the ruler-straight roads of Team Valley Trading Estate usually at weekends when the factories and offices were closed, and also on the A1, into the North Pennines and Scotland. She quickly became a very practiced and proficient driver to such an extent that on her driving test the terrified examiner failed her for over-confidence. Sometimes, you just can't win.

Zany Zephyr-Zodiac

I think a touch of madness descended on the family for our next car, when we part-exchanged the A35 for a 1957 Ford Zephyr-Zodiac, a garish red and black 6-cylinder monster which only scraped (often literally) through the driveway gateposts with 3" to spare. Steering

column gearchange, bench front seat, grinning chrome grilles front and rear, this was the epitome of appalling pseudo-Yankee taste which I can only attribute to a rush of blood. It was an aberration we were very soon to regret when the gearbox disintegrated, and the £35 replacement bill brought us to the realisation that any upper-middle class pretensions we might harbour were really not for the likes of us.

If only we'd known, at today's values the registration plate would probably have bought ten Zodiacs. It was first registered to a Whitley Bay landlady as **MTN 22**, promptly christened 'Dinky Doo'. **MTN 22** almost concludes my record of fortuitous acquisitions of rare motors and some even rarer registrations, at a time when they really started to appreciate with dramatic effect.

Cheerful Cherub

This chronicle cannot end without our first purchase of a brand new car. It was a basic Morris Mini, Minor, a cheerful cherry red cherub blessed with registration **3479 DN**, and predictably named Deanna on first sight. By paying cash I received a £35 discount off the list £565, not much by today's standards, but sufficient to buy petrol for the first few thousand miles. Poor Deanna coughed and spluttered her way through our ownership and into old age as a result of my 3 year old son shovelling dust into the petrol tank following theft of the petrol cap. I stripped the carburettor countless times and had the tank cleaned, but every few weeks the car would cough to a standstill, ready to have the float chamber drained and the jets and filters cleared yet one more time. Oddly enough, our Mini never suffered the wet-weather weakness of many of its fellow models (and also the 1100-

1300 range), often seen stationary at the side of the road whenever rain fell in excess of a light drizzle.

We have run a wide variety of motors since that time in 1962, but few have brought the hairy incidents or happy memories which these first ventures into the world of wheels created for us.

Devilish Digits

In the ensuing 40 years, only one car plate will remain forever branded into my memory. This was **YAK 666L**, a 1972 Audi 100 LS which left a frightening trail of death, misadventure and sheer tragedy in its five year life and left me with an awed respect of the 'Devil's Number', 666. I purchased it in 1975 from the estate of the original owner, a very successful businessman, who died suddenly from heart attack. Whilst in my ownership and on holiday in France I fell victim to that hated French rule of the road 'Priorite en Droit', subsequently abolished. The Audi was put into a garage in Le Touquet for temporary repairs, sufficient to get us back home. When put into a Leeds bodyshop for repair, the engineer pointed out a 9" gash on the inside of the front offside tyre, with the inner tube bulging out, in which condition I had driven the family almost 400 miles back to Yorkshire.

But **YAK 666L** hadn't finished yet. I sold it to a US airman stationed at Harrogate. A few months later whilst on a family outing with his wife, children and parents the car was involved in a horrific collision in which all the occupants died or suffered appalling injuries. Very sobering.

Today, we run a Ford Focus purchased new almost three years ago and it is perhaps a sad comment on the times that even now I simply cannot recall the singularly unmemorable computerised jumble of letters allegedly identifying our car. Now, if it was **GR 4** or **PTY 750** or **MTN 22** . . . that would make a very different story.

Vernon Wood



Mad about plates?

Do you have a story about number plates?

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

UK & International Number Plate News

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British cyclists may need number plates



The Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, has unveiled plans to introduce number

plates on bicycles. The plan is designed to catch cyclists who constantly violate traffic rules by running red lights or pedaling on pavements. The violator's numberplate would then be caught on traffic cameras and the cyclist would be prosecuted.

The number of bicycles on the streets of London has risen by 50% in the past five years, with the need for registration numbers becoming apparent. Livingstone did not say whether cyclists would have to pay to register their bikes, but registration plates would be compulsory.

Livingstone added that he was looking to introduce jaywalking as an offence, to fall in line with US legislation. This would make it an arrestable offence to cross a road anywhere other than a specific crossing.

Speaking on the London radio station LBC, Mr Livingstone said: "I think, I'm now persuaded, we should actually say that bikes and their owners should be registered. There should be a numberplate on the back so that ones breaking the law, we can get them off the cameras. It's the only way you can do it."

Many people had worried that the plans to outlaw jaywalking would almost certainly mean that many more crossings would be built, making it even harder to drive in London. Livingstone admitted this

point, saying: "But if you are going to ban jaywalking you're going to have a lot more actual formal pedestrian crossings."

New style number plates for Belgium



Vehicles in Belgium will be displaying new-style number plates as from 2008.

The current system of three letters followed by three numbers will be exhausted.

The new-style number plates will be combinations of three numbers followed by three letters, after the government ruled out the introduction of a larger European Union number plate model, as used in Germany, Holland and Britain. Changing the size of the number plates would cost too much money and result in the taxpayer footing the bill, according to Belgian Federal Transport Minister Renaat Landuyt.

In Belgium, everyone who registers a car receives a personal number plate, which they keep throughout their lives. In most other countries, such as Britain, the number plate stays with the car. As a result, all 14 million possible combinations of three letters followed by three numbers will be exhausted by 2008.

Personalised number plates anger Hong Kong businessmen



A group of businessmen in Hong Kong are campaigning for the sale of personalised number plates

featuring company brands to be banned.

The news comes after number plates featuring the terms 'HSBC' and 'Sony' were sold at auction on Saturday, along with another spelling 'Ferrari'. The plates were sold to a restaurateur for HK\$2 million (£135,000).

Business group have warned over copyright issues and the possibility of lawsuits if the numberplates are used for commercial purposes.

Finance development chief Fred Ma, said: "We had already consulted legal opinion when we formulated the scheme. We are confident that the personalised vehicle registration scheme can stand up to (legal) challenges."

Commemorative number plates cause confusion in USA



Last month's South Dakota Vietnam War Memorial Dedication caused confusion for

some of the attendees, when commemorative number plates were received in their gift bags.

Some of the veterans attending the event believed that the number plates could be displayed on their cars as regular car registrations. Officials at with the South Dakota Department of Revenue and Regulation, Division of Motor Vehicles, were quick to end the confusion. Division Director, Debra Hillmer, said: "A vehicle must

continued > > >

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