

The World of Personal Number Plates Summer 2009

Regtransfers

.co.uk

David Gold

Summer 2009 £5 where sold



The British Forces Foundation's **Lap of Honour** Campaign

The British Forces Foundation – a charity that boosts the morale of the Armed Forces, primarily through top quality entertainment with big name stars – launched its Lap of Honour project in June 2008. Fronted by BFF Trustee Katherine Jenkins, the project marks the charity's 10th anniversary year. The registration number **GB08 BFF**, mounted on a patriotically painted Mini, was chosen to draw attention to the fact that The BFF supports the serving men and women of our Armed Forces from all over Great Britain.



The new Mini has been engaged in a year-long adventure around the country getting 50 British icons to autograph one car, and 100 companies to lend their support. The 50 icons represent the British elite in all spheres and the list includes **Sir Michael Caine, Sir Jackie Stewart, Rod Stewart, Lewis Hamilton, Kate Moss, Joe Calzaghe, Sir Elton John, David Beckham, Baroness Thatcher, Eric Clapton, Joanna Lumley and Gordon Brown** outside Number 10, Downing Street. Top Gear presenters **Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond** and **James May** also signed up during filming at the programme's test track in Surrey.

The last few months alone have seen Gordon Brown sign outside Number 10, Baroness Thatcher in front of The Royal Hospital and also backstage at *The BRIT Awards 2009*. Recent activity has attracted strong media attention on a number of different occasions and this includes prominent features in *The Sun*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Express*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*, to name a few.

BFF Director, Mark Cann, said:
"The Lap of Honour is more than just a fundraising event for the charity or a focal point to mark ten years serving the Armed Forces. It is a celebration of the British link between companies, eminent icons and



Sir Jackie Stewart

serving personnel. The very act of demonstrating support will send a clear message of solidarity to those on the frontline, which will in itself be a significant boost to their morale."

The **GB08 BFF** car will be on display in various locations before it is eventually auctioned off in July. Recent venues have included Mini Park Lane, The Royal Automobile Club's historic atrium and The National Motor Museum.

To find out more, visit:

www.lapofhonour.org.uk

or call Ben Vestey on 01672 564911.



Left to right: James May, Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond



It's Tea for Linda

First of all let me thank you for supplying me with the most apt number plate ever. **T4 LGD**.

At six weeks old, I refused to drink milk, so my mother tried me with tea. Bingo!

I absolutely love my daily cuppas, so to find this number plate on your website was tremendous, **T4 LGD** (Tea For Linda Grace Davies).

Linda Grace Davies
by email



Grace and Favour

Here is our granddaughter, Annabel Grace Robinson, with the number plate **X4 AGR** which we purchased for her.

Obviously at 21 months old, she can't put it on her tricycle, so we're looking after it for her until she's old enough.

We were so pleased, that we decided to get **X4 DDR** for ourselves!

David and Dorothy Robinson
by email

What's the story?

Send **YOUR** stories
and photos to:
editorial@regtransfers.co.uk



You Can't Miss McKay

I typed in my initials just to see what would come up, but there was nothing that I really fancied. Then, I typed in MKA for my partner, Janet Mackay. To my surprise it found the perfect number, **M155 MKA**.

You know when you are following Miss Mackay.

Mike Norton
by email



RegAlert Once Again

I wanted to purchase a number plate for my wife Lynn, so I used **RegAlert**, the Regtransfers wanted list. In January 2008, I received an email from Stuart, one of your sales advisors, with the number plate **A12 LYN**. I purchased it immediately and gave it to my wife, Lynn, on Valentines day.

My father-in-law, Len, asked me to find a number plate for him as he was so impressed with Lynn's number plate.

So, I used RegAlert once again and, after just six months, **A14 LEN** became available and Len bought it immediately through Stuart at Regtransfers.

David Hogg
by email



T21 MLT

I recently turned 21 and decided to get a set of plates to remember the big day. So, when I found **T21 MLT**, I was over the moon. It wasn't long before the plate sale was completed and now I have the registration on my car.

Thank you all for the wonderful service.

Marcus Thorp
by email



A Fitting Number

The reason for buying this number plate is that, this year, I am celebrating my 20th year in business.

My initial is K, 90 is the year I started my fitness and street dance club, Boogie Shoes Fitness (BSF). So, **K90 BSF** is great for me!

Karen Neethling

www.boogieshoesfitness.co.uk

What's the story?

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and photos to:
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Delight

I am writing to express my delight and pleasure in dealing with Regtransfers, especially your sales advisor, Barry, who dealt with me in a most friendly as well as professional manner.

He really is an asset to your company through the knowledge he has regarding number plates and the courteous manner that he displays.

I am delighted with my number plate **887 CRO** as displayed on my Mercedes E270 and wish to thank Barry for sourcing me this plate as well as negotiating a price for me to purchase it.

I would recommend anyone looking for a personalised number plate to contact Regtransfers and, indeed, ask for Barry.

By the way, I rang another number plate company which advertises on the web and I am still awaiting a response from them. That was over two weeks ago!

Peter Crompton
by email



Out in the Cold

Just a quick thank you email with reference to my purchase of number **S4 VCM**. It was handled in a professional manner from my first phone call to your office to the return of the documents and the putting on of the new plate.

My wife (pictured) is over the moon with the number plate. (It was very cold that day!)

Steve Morgan
by email



TEN out of TEN

Last week I had cause to contact your company regarding the registration **F1 JED**, which my son, Jed, was interested in buying.

I have just retired from H & H Classic Auctions after many years and I certainly know my way around cars, automobilia, and number plates.

Firstly, I would like to thank Charley, a lady on your sales staff. She was prompt, efficient and good to her word.

The plates arrived on the 4th of April, just a matter of days after the purchase.

My wife and I have owned **TEN 14** for over 25 years, **VUM 2** for 15 years, **VMU 1** for 20 years and **53 FJF** for over 15 years.

Once again, thank you for your professional good service.

Mark Hamilton
by email



Buy One Get One Free!

Here is our car with its new '2 for 1' registration, **AL05 SUE**, purchased from Regtransfers.

Could this be the first 'Bog Off' plate?

Allan and Sue Saunders
by email

*The secret of joy in work is contained in one word - excellence.
To know how to do something well is to enjoy it.*
Pearl Buck, *The Joy of Children*

Number Ones

Regtransfers.co.uk offers by far the largest selection of these attractive and desirable marks, the ownership of which represents both the ultimate personal statement and serious investment potential.

The most desirable Number Ones are those preceded by a single letter: **N 1**

These are valued above the reverse arrangement, where letters follow the number one: **1 N**

Those sporting two or three letters still fetch a premium and relate easily to initials, short words or acronyms.

Between 1983 and 2001, a single letter prefix was used to indicate the date of original registration:

A1 WXY (1983) • **N1 WXY** (1996)

These great plates offer an exciting alternative to the classic 'dateless' versions.

Photograph by: **Charles Hudd ms**

Charles, who is a specialist urological surgeon at The Princess Margaret Hospital, has many other classic registrations including, **W111 LLY** and **OS05 OFT**.

Gold plated

No one could accuse David Gold of having had it easy. Like many of today's household-name entrepreneurs, he earned what he has through hard work and determination. Where Gold's story differs from most is in the sheer magnitude of adversity he overcame to get where he is today.

Gold is on record as describing the driving force of his success as "fear of going back". He once described a recurring nightmare that plagued him for many years. In the dream he would be driving his Bentley car, but instead of arriving at his luxury home, or his office, he would arrive at work on a building site with no money and just a bag of tools in the back of the car. Not a particularly bad dream for many in these days when any employment is better than none, but for David Gold the building site is symbolic of a bitter episode in his early life.

The young David was a keen football fan and youth footballer. Imagine, then, the delight and excitement he felt when, at 15 years of age, he was offered an apprenticeship with West Ham United, the team he supported. Now imagine the anguish that followed when his father refused to sign the forms, insisting that David should complete a bricklaying apprenticeship instead. That was just one of the disappointments David experienced in the course of his relationship with his father - a relationship that can be described as difficult at best. Not surprising, then, that dreams of building sites and poverty should be one legacy of his formative years.

Gold's motivating fear of returning to hardship has certainly been channelled into positive and tangible achievements. From the poverty of London's East End, David Gold has transported himself into a lavish lifestyle funded by an impressive business empire. His mansion - and that is surely the only word for an opulent house with 14 toilets - is attended by a 55-acre garden and golf course. He owns luxury cars, aircraft, several businesses and a football team.

David Gold's business interests have been many and varied, although much has been made by the media of his association with adult entertainment. His first enterprise was a modest one. He took on a small, many times failed, bookstore off Charing Cross Road when he was 21 years old. David soon noticed that the racier publications not only sold well, but that people would pay

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more for them. Since then he has published adult magazines and started the *Sunday Sport* newspaper. He also acquired the Ann Summers chain, of which he is Chairman, his daughters Jacqueline and Vanessa are Chief Executive and Deputy Managing Director, respectively. He is also Chairman and major shareholder of Birmingham City Football Club.

When Regtransfers.co.uk visited David at his home, our team paused for a few moments to try to take in the house and its setting. The place, especially that golf course, must take some maintaining.

"You know it's not overly difficult," says David. "The guys will mow the fairways in a day. The greens take about three hours and the rest of the time is just all the titivating. The bulk of what looks difficult actually isn't. They do it quite quickly."

Despite the constant maintenance that keeps the course in perfect condition, David doesn't spend all his time playing golf.

"I think I've played only half a dozen times this year; but it does get busy sometimes, because the company has a golf day here and Birmingham City staff come down for a Corporate day. I have some friends down for a few rounds, plus a number of charity golf events. Despite all of this it doesn't get used as much as it should."

David has lived in the house since 1995. He bought it three years before that but considerable renovation was needed before he felt ready to move in.

"The architect - the *first* architect, who only lasted one day - stood up on the bank there with me and he said 'We'll pull it down and we'll rebuild it higher up the hill'. But of course, I didn't want to do that. I was desperate to renovate it as it was. I just wanted to bring it back to its original state, as it would have been in 1850."

David was determined that the restoration should be as faithful as possible to the period in which the house was originally built. He seems satisfied with the result, particularly with the discreet way that non-

19th century features can be tucked away from view.

"All the televisions in the house are hidden either inside antiques, or in copies of antique furnishings. Even the replacement for the fireplace we couldn't save is period. We got it from Paris, from a house that was also built in 1850, so it's a French Victorian fireplace. The chandeliers are copies of the chandeliers of the time. All the shutters have been restored to their original state.

When the time comes to leave the house and get down to business, David Gold is spoilt for choice as far as transport is concerned.

"I've had a pilot license for 35 years and I've had a helicopter license for six years. I really should have done that earlier, because it is fantastic. Although I do still fly my fixed wing, I fly the helicopter ten times more because it's just so enjoyable, very easy and quick. I can get to the Birmingham training ground from here in 45 minutes.

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It takes me two and a half hours in the car. If I went by plane, although I can take off from here, I'd have to go to Birmingham airport and then get a car. The helicopter is infinitely more practical and more exciting. I use it all the time.

"It's really horses for courses. I love to drive my Daimler myself, but if I'm going to Birmingham by car I want to be driven in my Rolls by my chauffeur. If I'm going to Birmingham then I'll want to go in my helicopter. If I'm going to the South of France I'd want to go in my Lear Jet. If I'm just going in the grounds then I'll go in my 4-wheel drive or my golf buggy."

Of course, the Regtransfers team was intrigued to learn that David has personal registrations for his helicopter and his aeroplane.

"All the registrations on my planes are 'GOLD', so I've got GOLD T, GOLD X and GOLD W on those. I've got GOLD H and GOLD O on my helicopters. The other one isn't here at the moment."

Hang on... Planes - plural? Other helicopter?

"I remember, many years ago, I met a very wealthy guy. A girl and I went over to see him and he picked us up at the airport. As he was driving us back to his house, the girl asked if she could take a picture of his yacht and he said, 'Which one?'. I thought it was arrogant, but I still thought, wow! and here I am talking about my other helicopter. I hope that doesn't sound arrogant."

The helicopter is clearly David's favourite way to get about, but owning so many aircraft is not just an extravagant hobby. As well as offering a range of practical and flexible transport options, they also form part of his business.

"I've sold my airline [Gold Air International], just before the recession although I still keep my three planes. That is a business and they're hired out. It's like when people own yachts: they use their yacht themselves and they also hire it out to clients."

What about the personal number plates on his cars?

"Well, my daughters bought **D6 OLD** for me as a Christmas present. **1 GSP** is a company one for Gold Star Publications [the publishing company that Gold used to own]. The oldest one must be **GSP 3**, which is on the four-wheel drive. That's got to be 25 years old, I would have thought. Well I'm guessing, but I've had it for as long as I can remember. Nearly all of my numbers have been presents but I think I bought that first one about 25 years ago.

"In the early days I thought they were pretentious. I thought that having your own name or your own initials was pretentious, but then I thought it different to have the company initials, and that's why I had GSP.



We also had **GSP 43**, so every director in Gold Star Publications would try to get GSP with a 1 or 2 digit number. I ended up with **1 GSP**, and I've still got **GSP 3**. Another director has **GSP 10**. But then, years later, I started to think it was just a bit of fun. I thought it was fun to have D Gold, to have number plates that reflect who you are. Years ago people would have coats of arms, didn't they, the gentry, the wealthy, the famous would have their coats of arms. I think, in a way, that's what we do with our number plates. They're kind of like coats of arms, family coats of arms, aren't they? It just gives you a nice feeling.

"My helicopter has my...both my helicopters [laughs] and all my planes have the Gold name. The one that I liked most was GOLD D that I had on my HS125. If I could get more for my cars I would."

Other members of the Gold family also have an interest in personal car registrations.

"We do have J Gold for Jacqueline Gold, we have B Gold for my nephew, Bradley Gold. Yeah, B Gold, J Gold, D Gold so that's quite nice. But there wasn't a V Gold for Vanessa. If there had been I'd have bought Vanessa that one, but she's still got **1 VG**.

"They were all presents: I bought Jackie's and Vanessa's and they bought mine. It's a fantastic gift. It's a unique present, and you know, absolutely 100 percent, that they haven't already got one. If you buy a watch

they might already have that watch, if you buy them a car, they might already have that car, but if you buy them a number plate they definitely do not have it. It's so personal to them. It makes the present so special. As we've already discussed, there was a time when people thought they were pretentious, but that's now behind us. Personal registrations have become more and more popular. They make fantastic gifts and I think they're a pleasure to have. It can still be a bit of a status symbol as well.

"I'll tell you a little story. I travel to Birmingham every week in my Rolls Royce, and I go on the M40. I'm very proud of my D Gold number plate, and quite often when I'm parked people will come up and ask if they can have their picture taken with the car and the number plate. So, the car gets a lot of attention because of the number plate. When people ask to have their picture taken it's because they want the number plate in the photo, as well as themselves and the car. Anyway, I pulled up at Birmingham City Football Club one day, and this couple came up to me and asked if they could have their picture taken with the car. I said they could. They told me that they saw me every week and that I always overtook them on the M40 as they came up from Seven Oaks to the football match at Birmingham. They said, 'And we always recognise you and we recognise your number plate.' I thought yes of course you recognise my number plate, D GOLD on the

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Rolls Royce'. But they went on, 'Yes, yes we recognise your number plate D6 OLD'. So for a moment there I thought the car and I were quite famous, but clearly we're not. They recognised 'old', not my name!"

David clearly loves his name and is very proud of it. What better name for a businessman? It works on so many levels.

"When I think of promoting the name Gold, you can promote it with Goldfinger, you could have gold bullion, gold medals, gold star. You see, it's so easy to promote that kind of name. I think I'd rather have Gold than Branson. Although, I'd rather be as rich as Richard Branson!"

One number that David owned caused him a few headaches.

"Ah, 'Birmingham City Football Club', **13 CFC**. I had a Chevy people carrier that we used when we went to football - that was before we used to fly - and wherever I went we got a ticket. I remember it happening at Norwich, Oxford, Aston Villa. I went to Swansea once and we were running late and the police pulled us over because the 1 and the 3 were too close together. I sold it in the end because I got fed up with the pettiness of the bureaucracy. And, I must say, the irony of it was that my driver was caught speeding by a camera, so how illegal could that plate have been? Do you see what I'm saying? If the camera can read it, what is the fuss?"

Speaking of Birmingham City: at the time of the interview Birmingham were still fighting to achieve promotion back to the Premier League. We recalled that there was some considerable upset when the team suffered relegation last season.

"Upset? We were all upset. You know fans are passionate, I'm passionate. We were relegated, so my next thought was how I get the football club back into the Premier League. Whereas fans, they're angry. Their passion turns to anger. You know, not thousands and probably not hundreds, but some do get very, very angry and disappointed. People want to win. That's what drives us.

"But upwards and onwards. We'll be promoted."

Happily, that prediction has since been proved accurate, much to David Gold's delight, and other business interests are also doing well.

"Ann Summers is thriving. We have just opened a new store in Liverpool and during 2009 we plan to open a further five stores taking it up to a total of 140."

One of the innovative aspects of the Ann Summers business model was the party plan approach that had previously been more commonly used for kitchenware and fashion lines. How is that side of the business going?

"The parties are as popular as ever. When we opened our first store, nearly 20 years ago, our party planners thought it would

mean the end of party plan. 135 stores later, party plan is still as vibrant as it ever was. I must confess that I always thought that opening stores would reduce the amount of parties, but apparently not.

"There use to be a stigma about people going into stores, so that's why the parties were so popular. But now everyone can walk into Ann Summers because it's just like walking into any lingerie store. So, now that anyone, guys, girls can go at anytime, I expected that the parties wouldn't be as popular as they use to be. Retail stores were a different kind of experience. You know, husband and wife could go in there, boy could go on his own, singles could go on her own. So it is a different experience to party plan. And maybe that's why they've both grown and flourished side-by-side."

Despite being well known for the adult oriented publishing that has characterised much of his business career, his most recent publishing experience has been along very different lines. His autobiography, *Pure Gold* was published in 2006, but he is already re-writing it.

"I'm going to redo it, and update it. I might change the title from Pure Gold to...Solid Gold."

We are looking forward to the new version.

Interview: Angela Banh

Photography: Stan Thompson

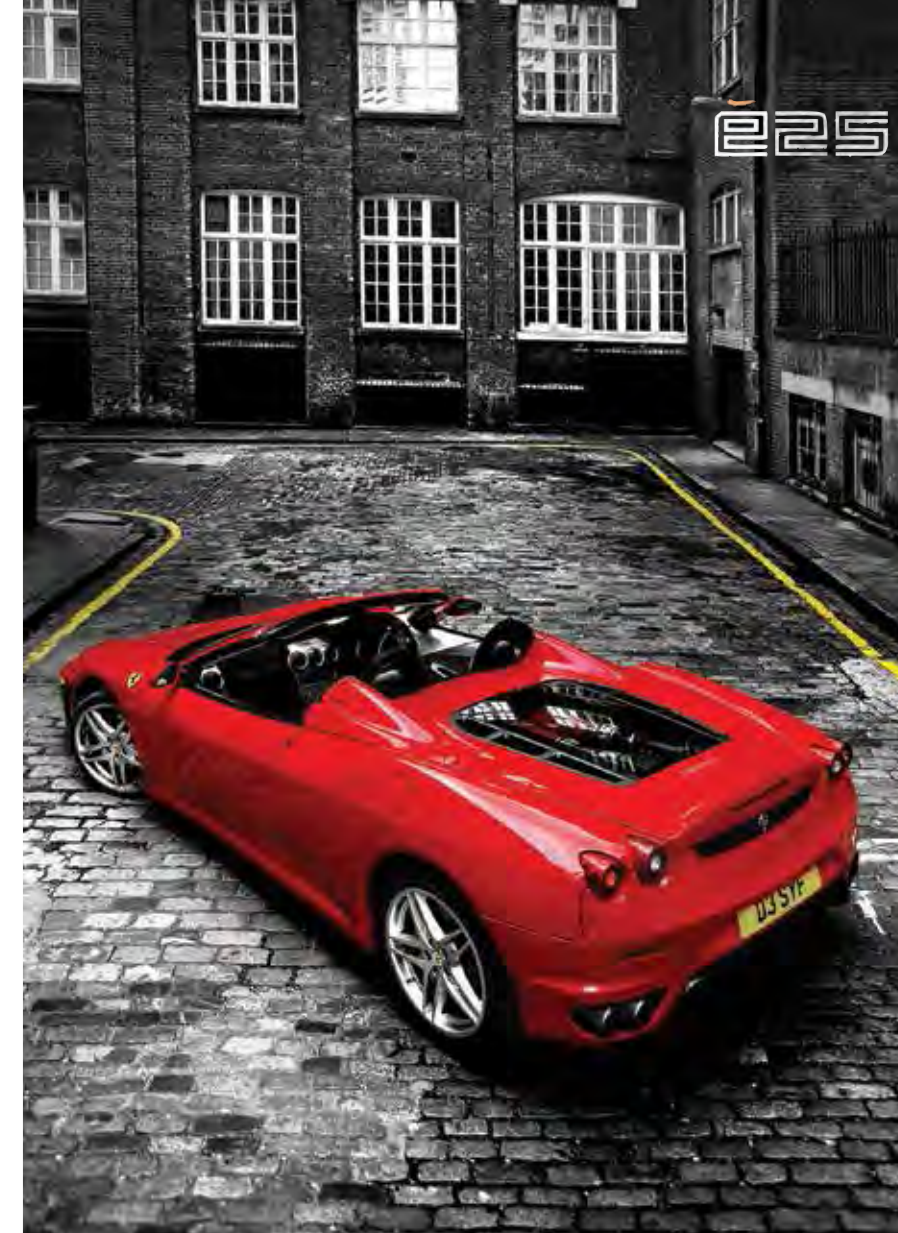


écurie25

More than just a supercar club...? écurie25 explain how the key to their success lies in offering more than just the best cars in the world...

What is the first thing you think of when the word 'supercar' is mentioned? Speed? Luxury? Extravagance? Well... you would be right – all of these things appeal to the current 150 members of the UK's largest supercar club – écurie25, but there's more to this club which keeps their members renewing year after year. Supercars are about a lifestyle choice, and écurie25 consistently makes sure that in every way possible they offer their members just that little bit more luxury meaning that as an écurie25 member you really will be getting access to a service you will not find elsewhere.

First of all some facts – écurie25 currently have a fleet of 16 cars which includes an Aston Martin DBS, three Lamborghini Gallardos, two Ferrari F430s through to a Maserati Quattroporte and a Porsche Cayman S – meaning there is something to suit every occasion. Their unique credit system for mileage and car time also means that you can use your membership in any way you wish – either burning it all up in a once in a lifetime European tour in a stunning red Ferrari F430 or enjoying the use of a fully serviced, valeted and immaculate Porsche Cayenne for weekend trips all year round with the whole family. This is not all – écurie25 are constantly adding to their fleet – with the addition of



the new Jaguar XKR Cabriolet less than a month ago they are already champing at the bit to get their hands on the Ferrari California which will be arriving in just a few weeks time. So an exceptional range of cars which is constantly changing – this is exactly what members are looking for in a

supercar club, but what more are écurie25 offering which has meant they are succeeding where so many others have failed?

Service. This is where the difference lies and why écurie25 members keep coming back for more.



Ecurie25 have been around long enough to know their membership base inside out – these are extremely busy people who have joined their club to avoid any of the hassle of supercar ownership and who expect to have everything taken care of, and this is exactly what écurie25 have done. From the very simple online booking system which makes availability of the cars apparent to all members right through the pick-up and return options which mean you don't even have to leave your office to get your weekend started – your car will be delivered to your door so you can just jump in and go. Or you may prefer to drive your own car to the perfectly located écurie25 clubhouse in Kings Cross where you will be able to enjoy the members lounge facility and talk to the extremely knowledgeable staff, knowing that upon your return your own car will be handed back having been fully valeted and with any minor repair work that you may have wanted, all done.

The quality of service for an écurie25 member does not however start and end



with the cars. Your membership not only includes access to some of the most exclusive events at top nightlife venues in London such as Movida, but even a concierge service, so you will truly be taken care of whatever your needs. For your birthday why not enjoy a private dining room in the iconic 'Gherkin' building with champagne and cake? Or perhaps you would like to entertain a top client in the private members lounge of the city-based Eight club? Or treat your wife to a day of pampering and champagne in the incredible Westfield shopping centre? Sounds good? For écurie25 members these 'fringe' benefits are all complimentary!

But écurie25 membership really comes into its own when it comes to performance

motoring. Members really enjoy access to exclusive hospitality at events such as the Monaco Grand Prix or road rallies such as this August's Nurburgring Run – a 1500 mile road trip in supercars across the best mix of roads that Germany has to offer culminating in a track day at the world famous Nurburgring.

So what does all this mean for écurie25 itself? The simple answer to this is success. The massive amount of value they place on each and every member commands a loyalty which has driven the success of this club and made it the largest in the UK. But it doesn't stop there – the club opened their first franchise in Ireland earlier this year and will open their next franchise in the North East of England this August, with plans to open in other major regions in the UK and internationally in the future – meaning access to cars all over the country and even the world for écurie25 members.

écurie25 is more than just a supercar club – it is an elite network for those who have a passion for motoring, luxury and the good life!

www.ecurie25.co.uk



Forbes Robinson

Forbes Robertson's story is certainly one of the more unusual ones to have reached the Regtransfers editorial office. Few of our correspondents have managed to combine themes as diverse as personal number plates, disco, lap dancing and Scotch Whisky.

Forbes, born in Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland, left school at 14 with no qualifications, something he says he now regrets. As a youngster he developed an early interest in cars and car registrations. His first job was as an assistant in a clothing store, but he soon realised that he could make more money cleaning windows than he could by working for someone else. At 17 he was already thinking like an entrepreneur.

Mornings would be taken up by Forbes's window cleaning work, and in the afternoons he would pursue his interest in cars and registrations, often visiting the various scrap yards of Ayrshire and asking the owners if he could look through old motor car log books.

"They always looked at me as if I was mad," says Forbes. "But they humoured me anyway. If I found any of interest, I would offer the scrapyard owner a bottle of Johnny Walker in exchange for the log book, and this seemed to do the trick."

The first number Forbes acquired by his unorthodox system was on the back of an old Reilly Elf. The registration **WSD 4** was an Ayrshire number and was indeed purchased for a bottle of whisky! The next number was **EOS 2**, closely followed by **MAG 18** and **MAG 19** - all paid for in the same liquid currency. Forbes subsequently sold these on to someone in Glasgow for £100.

"I now know that legally I should also have had the cars," admits Forbes. "but I knew no better then, and then no-one seemed to check."

The £100 profit from registrations dealing went into homemade disco equipment, and Forbes soon started a disco company

which he called 'It's A Secret?'. This he regards as the beginning of what he calls his business empire.

"The happiest days of my life, being young, free and single. Minimum employees, none of the bureaucracy of current employment and health and safety legislation."

Business boomed, and Forbes renovated an old farmhouse into a bachelor pad, with swimming pool, jacuzzi and sauna. He had also acquired a selection of cars: a Rolls-Royce, registration **AXS 1**; an E-type Jaguar, registration **JAG 143** and a 1938 MGTA, registration **FOE 100**.

"I then hit on the idea of converting my large house into a nursing home. What attracted me to that line of business initially was the VAT and rates exemption.

"I have expanded the home over the years, and there are now 38 residents, accommodated in *en suite* rooms, with adjoining further residential accommodation."



Throughout his business growth and diversification, Forbes maintained his interest in private registration numbers, and he continued to buy and sell number plates as they came along.

"My first FR number was **1917 FR** and I then sold this on and purchased **5 FR**, then **3 FR**, then **2 FR**. Finally, I managed to purchase **1 FR** at a Christie's auction. I knew at the time that, although bidding was going up £1,000 at a time, if I didn't purchase it then I never would have got it.

"When I was 39 years old, my ultimate number became available to me, which was **FR 1**. This was the first number ever registered in Blackpool in 1904. It belonged to the Mayor of Blackpool council. Why they ever let the registration go is beyond me, but it seemed like destiny that it should come into my hands."

The diversification continued, and Forbes acquired theme bars, a hairdressing salon, a rental property portfolio and a casino. His current project is an attempt to open



Ayrshire's first lap-dancing bar - not easy to do, but the prospects look good so far.

As if all the wheeling and dealing didn't occupy enough of Forbes's time, he managed to squeeze in an appearance in the Channel 4 show *Come Dine with Me*. The episode was a great success, and Forbes's private registrations were also featured on the programme!

As of September 2005, Forbes's Millionayr Casino achieved a Guinness world record and was featured in the 2007 edition of the famous book.

"It is ironic that I began by giving away bottles of whisky in exchange for log books, and I end up with the Guinness World Record for the most varieties of whisky available at a licensed premises!

"I really owe all of my success as an entrepreneur to my humble beginnings in the registrations game and my love for numbers," says Forbes. "My son and daughter will reach driving age in the next few years. Quite a while ago I obtained the registration **L10 YDR** for my son, Lloyd. My daughter is named Lauren, and I managed to find **LOR 3N** for her. They don't know that I have these numbers - it's been a well kept secret for many years, but no doubt once your article is published the secret will be out.

"I think Regtransfers is exceptional to deal with, and I would recommend you without hesitation."

Story: Rick Cadger

Photos: Derek McCabe

D&G Cars Towing the Line



D&G Cars is an industry leading vehicle recovery operator based in Essex. With a fleet of vehicles that now numbers over 100, D&G works with the major breakdown clubs, many haulage companies and local police forces. The number of vehicles and the extent of their other resources mean that the company is well equipped to deal with the many and varied situations and challenges that they are called upon to deal with.

Like an increasing number of image-conscious companies, D&G Cars has begun to display private registrations on its vehicles. Custom number plates on commercial vehicles can reinforce branding, and enhance the impression of consistency and organisation projected by a company. "The personal registrations on our fleet are very important to us," says fleet manager Steve Bowers. "They get our vehicles noticed and we feel they add a personal touch to a vehicle. I think it also shows attention to detail, which is really what our company is about."

Motorways are a vitally important aspect of the vehicle recovery business. With that in mind, D&G's managing director, Dennis Harding, decided to add **M1 TOW** to his fleet.

"Mick Jennings, our director, got into the office early on the morning of 1st July 1994," Steve told us. "That was the morning that the 'M' registrations were released. Mick sat at his desk constantly pressing his phone's redial button until someone at the DVLA answered. Soon afterwards D&G Cars owned **M1 TOW**, and while he was on the phone Mick also bought **M11 TOW**."

In the photo below, Steve Bowers is seen with **M1 TOW** on his Land Rover Discovery. Amongst the other numbers D&G Cars owns, or has owned, are: **P2 TOW**, **P3 TOW**, **P4 TOW**, **UK54 DNG**, **MY54 DNG**, **GB54 DNG**, **DG54 DNG**, **MR54 DNG**, **Y25 TOW**, **DG51 TOW**, **DG03 TOW** and **DG07 TOW**.

Regtransfers is grateful to Steve and D&G Cars for sharing photographs and details of their fine vehicles and number plates. An impressive operation and an impressive collection, wouldn't you agree?

Rick Cadger



Ramside Hall Hotel & Golf Club

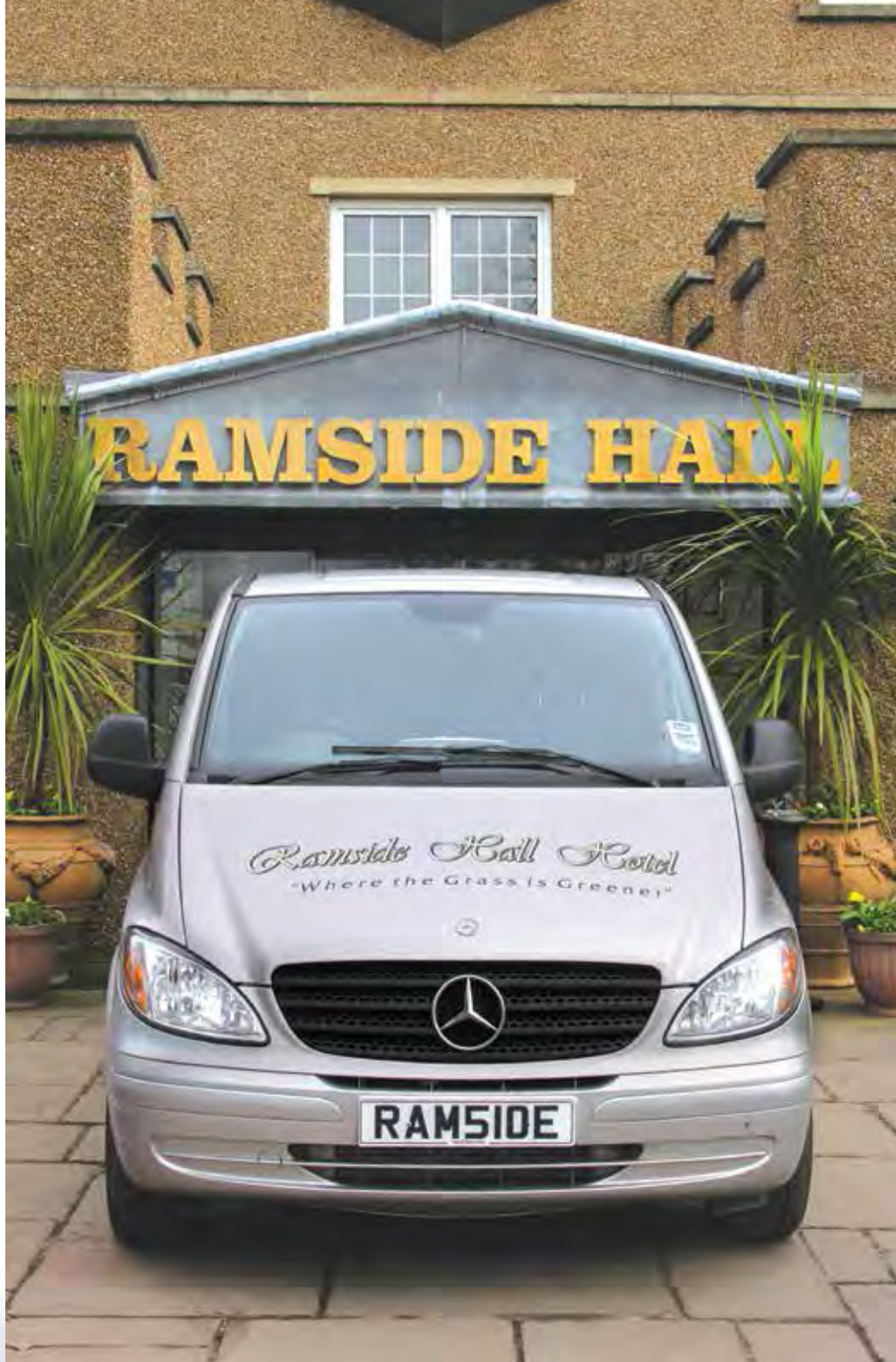
The Ramside Hall Hotel and Golf Club is an imposing place. In fact, The Ramside, as it is most widely known, is the North East's largest private hotel and golf complex. The establishment caters for a wide range of requirements including weddings, conferences, private parties and, of course, golf.

Ramside Hall was formerly the home of the Pemberton family, until it was sold and turned into a hotel in 1963. In keeping with its origins, the country house atmosphere has been carefully preserved and the guest rooms and function rooms have been decorated and furnished accordingly. However, although the décor is traditional rather than modern, this in no way inhibits the provision of contemporary high-tech facilities such as multi channel television and wireless internet access.

While the setting and facilities are luxurious, and the whole place exudes an air of elegance and quality, there is a lighter side to The Ramside too. Popular with local people as well as corporate clients and visiting guests, the hotel hosts a variety of entertainments to suit many tastes. A particular favourite is the selection of musical tribute acts that has proved very popular. Visitors have the opportunity to enjoy entertainment in the styles of Kenny Rogers, Dolly Parton, Tamla Motown and more. The Ramside demonstrates that there is a time and a place for everything, and it is possible for the formal and informal to co-exist successfully.

A few years ago The Ramside decided to brand their customer courtesy transport with a private number plate. The registration they eventually acquired was **RAM 510E**, which is displayed on a silver Mercedes minibus. As can be seen in the photographs on this page, the striking registration really does make an effective feature on the vehicle and was the perfect choice for the business.

www.ramsidehallhotel.co.uk



Win a night at Ramside Hall!

Enjoy a night's bed and breakfast for two in the luxurious setting of the North-East's most prestigious hotel.

Simply answer this question:

What was the name of the family who owned Ramside Hall before it became a hotel?

A: Pemberton

B: Pemberley

C: Pomberton

Then, enter your answer online at www.numberplates.com/competition

Online entries only.

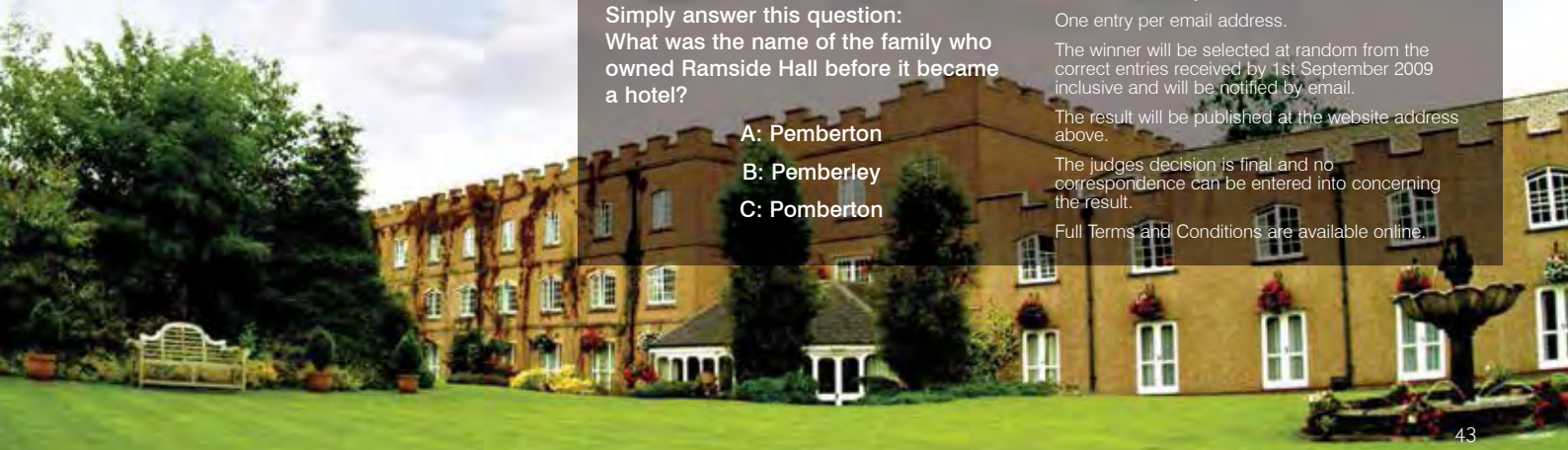
One entry per email address.

The winner will be selected at random from the correct entries received by 1st September 2009 inclusive and will be notified by email.

The result will be published at the website address above.

The judges decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into concerning the result.

Full Terms and Conditions are available online.



Coventry Transport Museum

When the last classic Jaguar XJ to roll off the production line at Castle Bromwich was donated to Coventry Transport Museum, the museum team was anxious that the car should be registered with a number plate that befitted its significance. The 2.7 litre diesel XJ6 'Sovereign' was the very last car to be produced in a long line of ground breaking Jaguar XJ models going back to 1968. After exploring several Jaguar-related number plate options with Regtransfers.co.uk, staff at the Museum eventually settled on **CB09 JAG**.

"As a museum we are here to preserve what Coventry is all about, and Jaguar is a key



part of that history. We were thrilled to be donated this fantastic car to ensure it can be enjoyed by future generations. The plate we have chosen reflects both Jaguar and the fact that the car was the last of its type assembled at Castle Bromwich in 2009 - hence the CB09 - and is absolutely appropriate for this historic vehicle," said Gary Hall, Chief Executive of the museum.

The Jaguar XJ is by no means the first vehicle displayed at the museum to have a personal number plate: two other notable examples are a 1907 Standard Roi de Belges, which bears the registration **SMC 1** (Standard Motor Company 1), and a 1965

Alvis TE-21 which has a registration plate **1 ALV**.

Coventry Transport Museum displays the largest collection of its type in the world, and **CB09 JAG** joins over 600 cars, cycles, motorbikes and commercial vehicles housed at a city centre location the size of three football pitches! Anyone interested in the history of British road transport can enjoy the Museum for free. If you do decide to pay a visit, don't forget to look out for those extra special personal plates.

www.transport-museum.com



Jay Bridger



20-year-old Jay Bridger has his sights set on the motor racing big time. The exciting young Formula 3 driver has impressed commentators with his determination and talent, and it can only be a matter of time before he takes his place on the F1 starting grid.

Like Lewis Hamilton and Jensen Button, Jay cut his teeth on the karting circuit. A farmer's son from Kent, he began his driving career at the age of six, racing around the family's farm. The high point of his rise so far has been his victory in the 2008 British F3 National Class Championship.

One might expect a racing driver to have more than a passing interest in cars. In Jay's case, that interest extends to personal registrations too.



Jay's manager, John Haffenden, sent us some photos of Jay with his great personalised registration **F3 JAY**. The picture on this page shows Jay at Donington, with his private plate on his F3 racing car.

Jay also owns **E18 JAY**, which he had for his 18th birthday, and manager John owns **JBH 2**: all purchased from Regtransfers.co.uk, of course!

www.jaybridger.co.uk



NEW!

registration**forum**

Welcome to our brand new feature,
The Registration Forum.

John Harrison, one of the country's leading authorities on the British registration system, editor of *1903 and all that* and Archivist and Adviser to the Registration Numbers Club has agreed to answer readers' queries.

Please email your questions to:

forum@regtransfers.co.uk

or by post them to:

Registration Forum
139 High Street South
Dunstable
LU6 3SS



I have a personalised number which I placed on my ex-partners car. We have split up and she refuses to part with it. Can I get it back from her?

If your ex-partner is the named keeper on the car's V5C and they will not consent to the transfer, you unfortunately have no redress. The registered keeper must sign the transfer form and DVLA will not accept a transfer unless they have done so.

If you put a cherished number on a vehicle of which you are not the keeper, e.g. on your partner's car as in your case or on a car belonging to your employers, you do run the risk of losing the mark, so you should be very cautious about doing this.

How can I research the history of my cherished plate?

If the mark is one issued by a local authority, i.e. one issued before 1 October 1974, the book *How Can I Trace the History of My Car?* by Phillip Riden gives appropriate advice.

Sadly, however, quite a lot of local authority records have been destroyed and, if your mark was issued by one of these authorities, you will unfortunately draw a blank. If your mark is a post-1974 one, I would need to know what it is to be able to give further advice.

My husband recently passed away and the company he worked for wants to take back the company car. My children would like to keep his personalised registration. We still have the previous plates that were on the car. Can I put these back on and then give the car back to the company?

No, as explained in response to the first question, the registered keeper, presumably in this case your husband's company, must agree to the transfer and this needs to go through DVLA's procedures.

You should discuss this with them. If the mark is valuable, particularly if the company paid for it rather than your husband, they may want reimbursement for it. I hope in the circumstances they treat you sympathetically.

My car has been in an accident and the insurance company has written it off. They have sent me an offer which I have not accepted yet. I want to keep my registration. What do I have to do?

Firstly, you need to contact the insurance company and tell them you want to keep the number. Particularly if your number is valuable, in making an offer for the car the insurance company might have included an allowance for the registration's value.

Assuming they agree to the transfer, which an insurance company would normally be willing to do, they should give you a letter confirming that agreement in writing and you should then apply to have the mark transferred to another vehicle or put onto a retention certificate in the usual way but also enclosing the insurance company's letter of agreement with the application.

Do not sign over the car to the insurance company or scrap it until the transfer/retention has been completed.

Has anyone retained a private number plate and been asked to bring the car in for inspection? I want to know how thorough they are in checking the car over?

DVLA has the right to inspect any donor vehicle in a cherished transfer and does so for a proportion. The purpose of the check is to verify the identity of the vehicle, so it would just consist of checking the chassis and engine numbers. Obviously it pays to know where these are - ask your garage if you are unsure.

1903 and All That

John Harrison's newsletter *1903 And All That* deals with all aspects of vehicle registrations.

It is published quarterly and costs just £5 a year.

If you are interested in subscribing and wish to receive a sample copy, simply send a large 76p stamped addressed envelope to:

John Harrison
175 Hillyfields
Loughton
Essex
IG10 2PW



Being Bond

Award-winning television star **Jack Marsden** has much in common with fellow actor Daniel Craig. As well as being of similar age and build, both have strong James Bond connections. Craig, as everyone knows, is the actor currently filling 007's shoes, while Jack Marsden was one of the other names on the shortlist for the role.

Jack is familiar to TV viewers from his roles in ITV's *Heartbeat* and the BAFTA winning BBC drama *Cops*. The *Heartbeat* appearance adds yet another ironic coincidence linking Jack with the current Bond actor.

"Daniel Craig said in an interview that he wanted to be in the programme because it is his mum's favourite show," Jack told Regtransfers. "I offered to do a job swap, with Daniel driving my white Zephyr patrol car if I can drive his Aston!"

Jack is a very serious Bond fan. Over the years he has invested a significant amount of money in acquiring the world's largest private James Bond film prop gun collection.

"I managed to collect my armoury of Bond film prop pistols by researching prop clearance companies and exclusive London auction houses. I got a lot from the Bapty auction at Christies in London in December 2006. Bapty were the film armourers for all the Bond films from *Dr No* to *Die Another*

Day. I also got some from the Propstore, who are the number one prop company."

Jack's collection contains 10 main pistols used by Bond in various films and as a whole his arsenal has been valued at over £250,000. At first the sum seems staggering, but perhaps less so when one considers the historical significance to Bond movie enthusiasts of the Walther P5 used by Sean Connery in *Never Say Never Again*, the Walther PPK used by Timothy Dalton in *The Living Daylights*, the Walther P99 used by Pierce Brosnan in *Tomorrow Never Dies*, and the stunt Walther P99 pistol used by Daniel Craig in the remake of *Casino Royale*.

"The props are displayed at my 'Being Bond' themed charity/corporate events and guests can donate to the charity and get a souvenir photo posing 'Being Bond' with one of the prop pistols," Jack said.

Marsden has supported a number of charities including The Red Cross, Francis House Children's Hospice, Bolton Hospice, the 5-Star Scanner appeal and The Baron's Trust.

Jack's thorough Bond theme concept naturally extends to his choice of car and number plate.

"My number plate **J18 OND** was bought in 2006 when *Casino Royale* had just been released and it was put onto the same styled 7 Series BMW that Pierce Brosnan

drove in *The World is Not Enough*. That one was Bond's most gadget packed car"

The car gets plenty of use in good causes. Jack has used it to transport sick children to events. It also add atmosphere to his 'Being Bond' experience.

In the last three years, Jack has raised approximately £250,000 for charity through the events he has organised and supported, and his car and plate are an important part of his fundraising equipment.

"The number plate is a must-have investment for me, as it would be for any other keen Bond fan or collector. It has certainly been a useful business tool for me, adding to my company profile and to my corporate events."

Jack Marsden's crime busting on-screen persona has, on occasion, overflowed into real life. In 2000 he went to the aid of a woman cyclist in Manchester when two men stole her bicycle. Martial arts expert Jack chased the men through the streets until he caught one and pinned him to the ground. His actions were recognised with a special Citation of Merit given to him by the Chief Constable.

Well, all we can say is, good work, 007.

The 'Being Bond' event can be contacted online at:

info@beingbond.co.uk

or by telephone on: **07548 007 007**



Number Plate News

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The Personal Number Plates Club

New York Plates Turn Heads

Henry DeRossi from Long Island, New York is always being mistaken for a 'porn' trader because of his XXXPERT car registration. "You'd be surprised how many people stop me when I am at a light and want to buy porn," says the 78 year-old, whose plate actually refers to his business, Expert Metal Slitters of Long Island City.

It has become so much of an embarrassment that he has been asked to park the car at the back of the garage when he takes it for a service.

Henry is philosophical about it, however, and claims "I'm kind of a free spirit. I like it when I'm stopped and asked, 'Do you sell DVDs?'"

Many people celebrate their jobs or professions, whilst others champion their sports teams. Examples include 69METS and H8BSOX. More bizarre statements are realised with plates like YBENORMAL, BLUZMAN, PMS247 and ISTOP4SEX.

Daniel Bahno of Staten Island chose 7D1NOVA in honour of his beloved automobile. "It is sort of like the end of the muscle-car era," Bahno said, about his restored 1971 Chevrolet Nova.

The patriotic LUVNYC attracts lots of 'thumbs up' for Andres Henriquez and his wife, Janet Goldstein of Manhattan, who registered the plate on their Toyota just days after the September 11 attacks.

Ken Brown, spokesman for the licensing authority, the DMV, says that new plate registrations have dipped slightly in recent months but considers that this may have less to do with the state of the economy and more to do with the city's seeming inability to win the baseball World Series!

There are currently over 450,000 personalised plates in New York, where the registration system differs radically from that in the UK. Citizens pay just \$43 plus a \$25 annual fee, on top of the normal vehicle excise charge, for any acceptable and unissued combination.

Applications are screened by computer in an attempt to filter out obscene, lewd or lascivious phrases, and applicants are required to justify their reasoning behind a proposed plate.

Consequently, many are rejected or open to controversy: In 2007, GETOSAMA was initially thrown out, but the DVA subsequently reversed its decision. They received criticism, however, for acquiescing to a complainant who interpreted the ADK in ADK LUVR as a reference to a male anatomical part, rather than the Adirondack Mountains, as claimed by the applicant.

Many, however, have got away with risqué phrases: Patrick Jingool insists that XTC4UNME was in no way connected to drugs and that he simply wanted people to have more ecstasy in their lives. "I had too much time on my hands," the Brooklyn man reflected.

Number plate fan adds Stoke plate to his collection

Tom Talbot, from Stoke-on-Trent in Staffordshire, has great hobby – collecting personal number plates! He has about 40 of them now, including a very special TAL 60T on his own car.

"I've been collecting them for a few years," says Tom. "I haven't got any other hobbies apart from looking through registration numbers in the paper, but it's good because I can do it from my armchair and they are things no-one can take off you. I'll buy any that come up at a reasonable price."

Tom owns waste disposal firm, Talbot Alsager, in nearby Tunstall village and has put his pastime to great effect by supplying some suitable numbers for the firm's vehicles. The fleet are proudly adorned with numbers like AL54 GER and TUN 574L which are instantly recognisable around the town.

The latest acquisition is 57 OKE, in recognition of the local football team. Tom paid £7,000 in a telephone bid at an auction in Northampton. The reserve was only £1,900 but Tom says, "I'm very pleased to be the new owner, especially at the price I got it at. It was well within my budget,"

He is now looking for a similar one for neighbouring team, Port Vale. "They are just as important as Stoke so I can't forget them," says Tom.

Son, Anthony, commented: "We were all brought up in Stoke-on-Trent so he likes to collect the town names. He has got quite a few now. I think the Stoke one was a bargain."

Potters' Fan Goes Potty over Personal Plate

In an earlier story, we reported how Stoke City fan, Tom Talbot, wears his badge of honour on his car in the form of the registration S7 OKE

On the other side of the 'pond', it turns out that 43-year-old Rich Davies - who has lived in the USA for the past 28 years - also shows his support for the 'Potters' by the same method:

Rich has the number plate STOK FC on his car. Not only does this serve as a constant reminder of his roots, but it also helps to promote his interest in the team and the game among and ever-growing



legion of American fans in Raleigh, North Carolina.

"I was a big Stoke fan," said Rich "and would take the train to watch most home games even as a young boy. When I moved to America I believed no matter where I lived I would support my home team.

"Since Stoke made it to the Premiership a lot more Americans have heard of them and I get more comments about my connection with Stoke because of the plate.

In the USA, 'Vanity Plates' are common and can cost as little as \$35. A previous article concerning American number plates, showed many other examples of how the Yanks express their hobbies and interests through the medium of the personalised registration.

Rich's was just 15 when the family moved to the States. Reluctant to totally cut the ties with his hometown, he went into the American ceramics industry. This allowed him to return regularly to the Potteries of Staffordshire and his beloved Stoke, where he could always fit in a match day.

On his next 'business' trip, Rich will be taking the whole family - wife Ann, 42, and children, Brittany, 15, Stefan, 12, and Liam, 8 - to the Stoke v Portsmouth fixture.

Soon after Rich left the UK, the team were promoted to the First Division but were soon relegated, so he never got to share in the glory with them. Now that Stoke City are up among the 'big boys' in the Premiership, Rich is to fulfill a promise he made to the family in that event.

"They're really excited" says the proud expatriate. "We will see a Port Vale game too, but not as supporters, just for the experience."

> > >

The McCarthy Family

Dennis McCarthy has been a personalised registration plates enthusiast for many years. He and his family own several particularly nice examples. In fact, Dennis is not only a collector of private car number plates, he is also, by virtue of the fact that one of his registrations is over 100 years old, technically an antique collector! **CX 7**, an original Huddersfield number, is one of a couple of antique plates the family own.

"I have had **CX 7** for many years," says Dennis. "My wife, Jean, has her own personal registration too, **JEM 7**. My eldest son, Andrew James, has **A 270**, which is also more than 100 years old. James also has **AM 270**, which was originally on an Aston Martin racing team car, and he has **AJM 39**. This will also do for my grandson who is aged nine. Andrew has **HJM 6** which, ideally, he would like to exchange for **HJM 7**. That will do for my other grandson, aged 11."

Dennis tells us that Andrew would like to own **AJM 7** and **AJM 270**, so if anyone knows if either is available, perhaps

they'd like to contact us here at Regtransfers and we'll pass on the information.

Dennis's youngest son, Richard Charles, has **RCM 7**. Dennis purchased this when Richard was about 15 years old. When he got it, the number was on a Vauxhall with the old style black and white number plates. Richard's wife, Michelle Ann, has **MAM 606** although really she would like to exchange that for **MAM 7**.

"I am at present looking for a plate for my grandson, Lucas Charles aged 14 months," says Dennis. "**LCM 7** or some other low LCM number may be considered."

Bearing in mind the Regtransfers tradition of featuring celebrity personal number plates in the magazine and on the website, it is fitting that Dennis should have his own celebrity tale to tell.

"Many years ago I had the registration plate **EM 100**, which went on my wife's car. I eventually sold it to comedian Eric Morecambe for his Rolls Royce."



Eric Morecambe's Roll Royce with EM 100

The McCarthys are a real family of enthusiasts. Even though they all have great numbers of their own, they each have a clear idea of what number they would prefer to have, and they keep their eyes open for opportunities to change.

"I would like at some time to have **DJM 7** or other DJM low number," concludes Dennis. "I have had a few numbers from Regtransfers. You are very professional."

What's the story?

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