

The World of Personal Number Plates Issue 29

Regtransfers



Russell Watson





Philip Rudd with son, Jake

A Good PR Exercise

I first bought **E6 RUD** for my wife, Emma Rudd. Then, I thought it would be good to have matching plates, so I bought

P3 RUD, which stands for 'P E Rudd' and also helps to promote my business PR Decorators.

I also have **M16 PER**, which includes both my initials and 'M16' for my birthday, May 16.

We are really pleased with our plates and get great satisfaction from seeing them on our vehicles.

Philip E Rudd



Fame at Last

Personal number plates were something we had always wanted but, during our working lives, other things, like mortgages and our then busy lives in general during those early years took priority.

Now we are retired, we thought we would treat ourselves at last. So we decided that

we would buy them for our birthdays which were both during October.

Thank you so much for the excellent service we received and well done to your salesperson, Saf, for finding us two such appropriate numbers, **S8 KEN** and **A14 LYN**.

As a bonus, we also got one for our motorhome which had to be something to

do with motorbikes. Ken has been a motorbike man since his teens and is passionate about old British motorbikes, having restored many to perfection in his time. So, **EI BSA** definitely suits us.

We hope you publish our story. Will it be fame at last for two 'pensioners'?

Lyn and Ken Hougham
Great Yarmouth

By George

I first took an interest in number plates when I had my first job at the age of 15 in 1965. I was working for John Menzies wholesale newsagents in Rose Street, Edinburgh, just behind Princes Street.

One of my daily jobs was to deliver late papers and magazines to people in the city centre, like the Liberal and Conservative Clubs on Princes Street and to big offices all around the city centre. I used to see all the bosses' cars in underground car parks and some had personal plates. I started to take notes in a book of all the good ones I would see and even had a note of whom they used to belong to.

I changed jobs in 1970 and my interest waned, although I would still always try and spot plates. Alas, after moving house a few times since, I have lost the book. I moved to Nottingham in 1977 and became an industrial firefighter for the next 27 years.

I made enquiries in 1989 about trying to get **G5 YME** but was told it was not issued. In 2000 I saw that the plate was for sale at an auction in Birmingham along with **G15 YME**, which I tried to buy also. My wife's initial is 'I' so it would have read 'G and I Syme'.

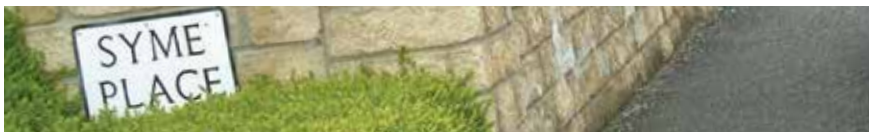
As it was my 50th birthday, my wife bought the plate for me. I first put it on a Y-reg



Rover 25 then changed it to its present car a 2004 Vauxhall Vectra.

Syme Place is at the old City Hospital site in Edinburgh which has now been converted to flats with some new housing. I was a patient there for eight weeks in 1974 and thought they may have named the street after me. In fact, it is named after James Syme, an eminent 19th century surgeon.

George Syme.



mail



What's the story?
Send **YOUR** photos to
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Photo: Sue Cowey

You've Been Framed

We couldn't resist sending you this one and hope that you like it as much as we do.

My husband, Ian, and I were married on New Years Eve 2010 at Grinkle Park Hotel, Saltburn, Cleveland and asked our wonderful photographer, Sue Cowey, if she would kindly take pictures of us with our cars. She played with the image and managed to come up with this picture of us inside the Bentley grill.

His is a Bentley with the **BKO 80Y** plate, mine an old BMW X5 with **X5 BKO**. I have a new one on order now though!

Our nickname is 'Bucko' from our surname and 'BKO' derives from that. We also have a Porsche 911 Carrera 4 wide-bodied version with the personal plate, **7362 IB**.

Ian and Jenna Buckton

Russell Watson

The operatic tenor is a popular species. For some reason, a striking number of male singers in that range and style have managed to successfully bridge the gap between popular and classical music. In the first half of the 20th century, Enrico Caruso and, later, Mario Lanza established themselves as international stars with an appeal that reached far beyond the traditional. Luciano Pavarotti, José Carreras, Plácido Domingo, Andrea Bocelli, and Alfie Boe, all singers in a classical or quasi-classical style have become household names, even amongst people who would be amongst the last to consciously identify themselves with 'highbrow' culture. But even within this paradoxically accessible genre, certain stars strike a particular chord with ordinary people.

Russell Watson is an ordinary bloke: a former bolt cutter from Salford who has sung in working men's clubs and at football and rugby matches. He swears, likes a laugh and the odd drink. Even the bolshiest of entrenched inverted snobs would have to admit the complete absence of unearned privilege in Watson's background, and respect his impeccable, keeping-it-real credentials. Despite the fact that he sometimes sings 'posh' songs, Russell Watson is the genuine article and pretends nothing else.

On the other hand, some of the more conventional snobs have questioned the suitability of his voice for operatic repertoire. Rupert Christiansen, *The Daily Telegraph's* pompous opera critic, called Watson a 'karaoke crooner'. One wonders how much such a comment is motivated by real technical consideration and how much by elitist resentment of working class encroachment into the outskirts of high culture. It hardly matters. Self-proclaimed arbiters of taste and quality abound within the arts, and they seldom agree on all points. In the absence of critical consensus, the sensible thing is to resort to democratic metrics in the form of



The Fans

When the fans from Russell's internet forum heard that he would be appearing in our magazine we received quite a few eager advance requests for copies. We heard from Russell Watson fans from as far afield as Australia and Japan.

If our sample is anything to go by then the vast majority of Russell's fans are probably ladies, as we didn't hear from a single gentleman fan. The enthusiasm of the ladies of the forum has been most encouraging and we are very grateful for their support. As well as sending us their contact details so we could mail their magazines, some of them shared a few words about Russell.

"I have been a fan of Russell's for over 10 years and also have my own fansite for him. In those 10 years I have travelled thousands of miles from Scotland to see him in concert, mostly by public transport as I don't drive!"

Sandra, Scotland www.russellwatsoninfo.co.uk

"I first heard him sing on Good Morning America TV show from New York in 2001 when The Voice was released. Instantly I became a fan. I first saw him live in Osaka Japan in 2005. Since then I travelled to the UK every year for his tour concerts etc. I follow after his concerts to New York, Dublin, Taipei - wherever possible. I am going to some Queen's Jubilee concerts in the UK as well."

"Russell has kept on coming to Japan almost every year. Last year, we did experience the earthquake devastation. In that difficult time, Russell dared to come to Japan to cheer us up. I fell in love with his magnificent voice and absolutely wonderful personality as well."

Keiko, Japan

"I first saw Russell Watson at the Lord Delfont Tribute show at the Blackpool Opera House in 1996. I then saw Russell in the Lily Savage show on the North Pier Blackpool also in 1996. I then went on to see him perform at the Working Men's Clubs in Blackpool and St Anne's. We soon became friends. After one of his performances Russell asked me to help him carry his sound equipment to his car."

"I've also seen Russell play the part of Dandini in Cinderella at Bradford in 1997. I have fantastic memories of seeing Russell in many shows in Blackpool and at the Blackburn and Liverpool Cathedrals before he became famous. I've been a loyal follower since 1996. I've seen Russell go from strength to strength. I have met so many good friends from all over the world who Russell has brought together with his wonderful voice."

Sarah, England

"I am going to Australia in a few weeks' time to finally fulfil my dream of seeing Russell perform live at the Sydney Opera House. Once there, I'll be meeting up with fans from Japan as well as various parts of Australia. This has all come about through our love of Russell and his music, having met online via Russell's Fan Forum."

"I have made friends with these lovely people from around the globe, all of them having, at some time, visited the UK in order to see Russell in concert."

Jill, England

"I was actually at Old Trafford in May 1999 when Russell sang there for the first time and got his big break as a result. I didn't know who he was then, but his rendition of 'Barcelona' was absolutely stunning and I thought he had the most amazing voice I'd ever heard! (Still do of course!) I've been fortunate enough to meet him several times over the years at various events - he's a lovely guy and really appreciates his fans."

Christine, England

ticket and record sales. Judged by these more easily quantifiable (and most might say more relevant) criteria, Russell Watson is a hit.

Watson has always been around music. His maternal grandfather was an accomplished pianist, and both of his parents used to play records constantly at home: classical music for his mother and country and moderate rock for his father. The young Russell formed doomed bands with schoolfriends, and his first ever 'gig' was playing and singing in a guitar duo to a roomful of senior citizens at a local day centre. He was paid in tea and biscuits.

Russell's singing career seems to have eventually happened almost by accident. It was one of those moments that one looks back on and wonders how different things might have been if a different decision had been made. In Russell's case, that life changing decision was to walk into a pub where he was persuaded to take part in a talent contest held by a local radio station. Russell won his way through all the stages and the final, and was subsequently taken on by an agent who began to get him regular local gigs singing pop covers and rock and roll standards. It was at this point that Russell quit his day job as a bolt cutter to sing full time.

For a time it looked as if the pub circuit might be the extent of his fame. Financially, times were hard for Russell and his wife, Helen (from whom he was divorced some years later) so the singer found himself performing in a series of increasingly rough venues and, ultimately, very nearly conceding defeat and going back to factory work. But a second agent helped him to make the difficult transition from pub gigs to the more civilised and lucrative club scene.

By this time, Russell had supplemented the Elton John, Lionel Ritchie and Buddy Holly covers with some songs from stage shows such as *Phantom of the Opera*. This slight shift towards bigger vocal performances prompted the concert secretary at one of the club venues to ask

if Russell had ever considered singing operatic material. The man insisted that Russell had the voice for it and specifically suggested opera's greatest hit, 'Nessun Dorma'. After a few weeks of preparation, Russell tried it out on an audience at the end of a gig. He got a standing ovation.

Russell gradually introduced more classical repertoire into his set. Although something of a leap from the pop material he had started with, it was made easier by his familiarity with the songs. After all, this was the music Russell had heard every day as he grew up.

People started to take notice. His set was different from the usual club singer fare that audiences had come to expect. More people stopped to speak to him after his performances and some of those people





were able to point him in helpful directions. Some of them knew people who knew other people who, step by step, helped Russell to advance his career. His voice, his repertoire and his knack for making friends earned Russell a season in Blackpool, with Paul O'Grady in his guise as Lily Savage. In the northwest of England, Blackpool is to some extent analogous to London's West End. It is a serious entertainment capital: it is where things happen.

Blackpool was a real boost. It led to other gigs that gave Russell still more useful exposure. A performance in Manchester's Midland Hotel resulted in a conversation with Manchester United chairman Martin Edwards. The eventual consequence of that encounter was Russell's legendary

performance of 'Nessun Dorma' at Old Trafford in May 1999. Russell has described it as the defining moment of his career. It was a memorable day: his performance was outstanding and the team he had supported since childhood won the match and the championship.

More performances at big sporting events followed, as did more of that fortuitous intervention by people who heard him sing. Someone who had been impressed by Russell's talent sent a CD to Sir Cliff Richard and so Russell was recruited to perform alongside one of Britain's most popular music legends. Another link in the great chain of chance was forged: one that led to a record deal with Decca. The recording contract was one of the few remaining missing links.

With that done and dusted, Russell had achieved a momentum of his own. Although he still valued the opportunities to work with other fine performers, he was no longer a support act. He, Russell Watson, was a big name: a celebrity in his own right.

The catastrophic blow dealt to Russell and his family in 2006 when he was diagnosed with a pituitary adenoma (a kind of brain tumour) has been widely reported, particularly in Russell's autobiography *Finding My Voice*. Surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy twice removed his tumours, but the ordeal changed his life in many ways. He and his illness have become inextricably linked in the minds of the public, and it is a subject that Russell faces head on.



As well as the consequences that anyone in a similar situation might expect to experience, the illness had implications for Russell's music, both in the way he feels about the songs he sings and with regard to his physical abilities as a singer. Considering the very grave condition into which he descended when things were at their worst, the legacy of his illness and long recovery on his professional life has been, at least in part, surprisingly positive. His three performances in the Andersson and Ulvaeus musical *Kristina* at Carnegie Hall in the USA and the Royal Albert Hall in the UK received excellent reviews (although the former Abba duo's show itself did not appeal to everyone), not least for his 'acting' in the tragic final scene. Watson revealed later that the tears he shed owed nothing to thespian skill and everything to a renewed emotional connection afforded by his changed perspective.

"I nearly died twice," he said in a 2010 interview, "and that has to shake you up and make you see and feel things in a different way."

The surgery that saved Russell's life wrought physical changes in his nasal cavity and sinuses.

"When I first went back to work on my voice I thought it sounded terrible," he told our interviewer when the Regtransfers team visited him to deliver his new **T3 NOR** number plates. "But my vocal coach said, no, actually it could be even better than before."

After a lot of persistence and hard work, Russell came to agree with his coach, concluding that, far from destroying his abilities as a singer, the result was an enhanced, rich and vibrant timbre that should lend itself even more readily to the operatic material that he has been eager to explore further. The release of his well-received 2010 album, *La Voce*, afforded his audience an opportunity to judge for themselves.

Discography

Decca CD/Digital Download albums:

The Voice (2000)

Encore (2001)

Reprise (2002)

Amore Musica (2004)

That's Life (2007)

Outside In (2007)

People Get Ready (2008)

Epic CD/Digital Download album:

La Voce (2010)

The Regtransfers team visits Russell at his Cheshire home on a crisp, sunny February day. We are met by his charming PA, Victoria, who leads us directly to a super buffet lunch that has been prepared especially for our visit. This delightful welcome pretty much sets the hospitable tone for our morning.

Russell appears a few minutes later in a sharp Geoff Souster suit. He greets us warmly, shaking hands all round, and then leads us to a room that momentarily deprives Stan, our audiophile/cinephile photographer, of the power of speech. A large Bang & Olufsen television stands on a motorised plinth, while either side of the fireplace are the futuristically styled speakers of a magnificent hi-fi system from the same manufacturer.

In a state of near debilitating envy, Stan quips: "Couldn't you find a bigger television, Russell?", and then wishes he hadn't as Russell opens a set of double doors to reveal an adjoining, fully equipped cinema room, complete with wall-to-wall widescreen, projector and full

surround sound system. The hi-fi is soon gainfully employed and the strains of *La Voce* accompany our conversation.

Russell explains that one of the tracks, 'Be My Love' (a big hit in the 1950s for Italian singing star Mario Lanza), was recorded in remembrance of his beloved late grandmother for whom it was a particular favourite. He finds performing 'Be My Love' on stage a very emotional experience as it always evokes fond and poignant memories.

The fabulous sound system is symptomatic of Russell's attention to detail where the presentation of his music is concerned. At each venue he plays, he is very particular in ensuring that sound, lighting and staging arrangements are all up to the standard that he feels his audience deserves. The high quality of the hi-fi system at his home allows Russell to apply that same scrutiny to his own recorded vocal performance.

He will soon need to employ his critical approach to stage and recording work again.

"I am working on two projects at the moment," he says. "Firstly there's my forthcoming UK tour which starts in Manchester at the end of May and then moves on to the rest of the country throughout June. I have also just started working on my new album, which is due out later this year."

So there is plenty going on, but how does Russell feel about the future having already achieved so much in the face of extraordinary difficulties?

"I have been very fortunate to fulfil so many of my ambitions and dreams.



Wherever my life and career take me in the future I will always remember that it's been the support of my family, friends and fans that has made it possible. And I still feel that drive to give my very best to my music. I am very proud to have enjoyed such a long recording and performing career to date and I hope to carry on for a long time to come."

Having achieved so much, he is obviously qualified to impart advice to aspiring performers. What would Russell say to someone taking their first steps as a musician?

"You need to be a performer, an entertainer. Although it does help to have a good natural talent, that is not enough by itself. You also need to have a good business head. These days it's not all about the singing. It's also a business, and the more success you have the more there can be at stake."

But life isn't all about work and business. How does Russell relax?

"I love tennis and I play as often as I can, at home or abroad. It keeps me fit and gets me out in the open air."

We know that Russell plays piano and guitar. Does he ever feel the urge to get together with a few friends and just play some rock and roll in a local pub?

"Not really, to be honest; but I do sometimes have a bit of fun with my band or orchestra after rehearsals when I am touring. If I am out with friends I have occasionally been known to get on stage and jam a couple of songs, but it's never planned."

Russell seems very happy with his lot, but looking back is there anything he would change if he had the power to do so?

"I really don't feel I could change anything. All the highs and lows in your life make you who you are. I am, in short, the sum total of all my life's experiences, good and bad. I wouldn't change it."

'Desert Island Discs'

Which five recordings would you choose to have with you if you were stranded on a desert island?

'Nessun Dorma'
from *Turandot*

'In the City'
by The Jam

'Can't Help Falling in Love'
by Elvis Presley

'Bohemian Rhapsody'
by Queen

'Intermezzo'
from *Cavalleria Rusticana*

To be able to say that, after everything that Russell Watson has been through, is really quite remarkable.

*Interview: Angela Banh
Story: Rick Cadger
Photography: Stan Thompson*

"I was looking at getting a private plate about seven or eight months ago. I had a look online and there were a few that I saw, but there was one in particular that stood out and it was T3 NOR which, of course, is 'tenor'. I thought, *That's fantastic; it'd look great on my car.*"

Watch our exclusive

**VIDEO
interview**



youtube.com/personalnumberplates



Marketing on a Plate



Martin Langford runs a pest control business. How on earth does one promote a pest control business with number plates? Can it even be done? Clearly it can as Martin already has industry-themed registrations on two of his company's vans and is planning to buy a third.

"I started EBS Pest Control with two other guys I worked with. EBS is short for Environmental & Building Services. After a couple of trading years we got our first van due to expansion. It was important for me to get our abbreviated company name and also a connection with our industry on a number plate for the van. I purchased **EB51 RAT** to go on that first vehicle. We got our second van last year and, of course, it seemed important again to get the right number plate. As you may have guessed, we got **EB52 RAT** for this one.

"The numbers look great on the vans and we get a lot of great comments about them. Sometimes we even get increased business from the combination of our logos and our name on the number plates.

"We are now looking to get a third plate for the new third van and that will also have EBS on it."

Martin is a number plates fan in both a business and a personal context.

"I am an addict and love the presence of these plates as I think it promotes a sense of individuality and fun.

"I purchased **S1 MDL** about 10 years ago and always wanted to have the next number on my motorcycle. I really wanted **S2 MDL** but it was never available until recently. Once I noticed it on the Regtransfers web site, I called immediately and spoke to Michelle. Michelle telephoned the owner of the plate to see if they would accept an offer and, within about 20 minutes, she called me back with the answer I wanted. After a couple of weeks, I am now the proud owner of **S2 MDL**. It looks great on my bike.

"I would like to thank Michelle for her help in getting this number plate so quickly."



What's the story?
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Here for the **beer**



Alan and Heather Dunn own the Open All Hours convenience store in Keswick, in the English Lake District. They have run the shop for 29 years. One of Alan's particular specialities is the sale of good beer.

"I have a keen interest," he says, "and I am a judge of the International Beer Challenge, which annually awards prizes for the best bottled beers from around the world. I am also a founder of the Keswick Beer Festival which raises in excess of £50,000 for charity each year.

"Our shop is well known among beer aficionados and was voted The UK's Best Independent Retailer in 2006 and again in 2007. People travel long distances to buy from our selection of over 200 different bottled beers from around the world."

In addition to his fascination with beer, Alan has a long-standing interest in personal car registrations. It seems, then, somehow unsurprising that he should have ended up owning a beer-themed registration: but more of that later.

"For my 17th birthday, my elder brother bought me a book on car registrations, by Noel Woodall, which I cherished. This furthered my interest and, although my early career didn't allow me to have a private plate because I had a succession of company cars, as soon as I became self employed and could indulge in a private plate, I did.

"Along the way I have owned other numbers. I had **DNH 1X** - although I can't remember why now. I also had **ABD 1X** (ABD being my initials). I eventually sold **ABD 1X** to a gentleman from Exeter who had the same initials.

"I had **V50 PPY**, which looked like 'Very Soppo'. That one looked good on a Ford Puma but was eventually replaced by **R15 KYD**, 'Risky D' and then **T3 EER** which looks very like 'Beer'!

"For the past 6 years I have owned **TW04 ALE**, ('Two for Ale') which is my favourite plate. I think we will keep this forever.

"I recently bought an old BMW Z4 and, to disguise its age, I put **PJZ 4383** on it."

Alan is a keen member of Lions Clubs International, the worldwide fundraising and charitable organisation. Recently the registration **L1 ONA** ('Lion A') became available at around £6,000, but wife Heather mounted a firm resistance to Alan's thoughts of acquiring it!

www.personaldrinks.co.uk



Raj Ramparsad



Raj Ramparsad is vice president of his family's business, the Ganesh Corporation.

Raj recently purchased the registration **F1 GCL** for the company, which already owns a number of private number plates. **F1 GCL** now adorns their 200 mph BMW M6 Hamann Race Edition car.

Upon graduating from The University of Oxford, Raj treated himself to a Ferrari F1 360 Spider upon which he proudly displays his **F1 RAJ** personal number plate. Other numbers currently to be seen on Ramparsad family cars include

F1 RAM, F1 VHR, F1 GEM and F1 RAV.

The collection makes quite a sight when all six cars are parked together on the driveway.

Raj told us, "A special thanks has to go to Nigel, Carl and Ben at Regtransfers for securing **K1 NCS**, as well as several other plates from the '11' series, in a swift and professional manner, as always.

We bought: **GA11 ESH** (GANESH), **AD11 TYA** (ADITYA), **DA11 GER** (DANGER), **SN11 PER** (SNIPER) & **PR11 VCE** (PRINCE) as well as **SE12 APH** (SERAPH)."





Power Plates



What's the story?

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Barry Johnston is a renewable energy entrepreneur. He owns several companies in the Orkney Islands in the far north of Scotland and is involved in the production of clean energy from tidal and wind power.

His company Scotrenewables, which Barry founded in 2002, has developed a unique tidal turbine system which is currently the subject of a two-year testing programme. The innovative product is designed to be economical to install and operate, as well as to be effective in its production of electricity.

Barry's latest personal registration, **JON 57ON**, possibly the best possible representation of that name on a UK number plate, is pictured here on his new Toyota Hilux double cab pickup.

"This is the fourth private registration I have purchased from Regtransfers," says Barry. "A couple of years ago, I bought two plates for my father, Francis David Johnston, **F1 FDJ** and **F2 FDJ**, which also match the initials of my two young sons. I also bought **Y321 KEL** about three years ago.

"The service from Regtransfers is excellent and I was delighted when my offer on **JON 57ON** was accepted."

In the background of our photograph you can see one of Barry's commercial scale wind turbines, which generates clean electricity into the UK national electricity grid.

www.scotrenewables.com



"When you come from such a lineage," says Gina, "with Sir Malcolm as grandfather and then Donald as father, their successes and achievements are just so instilled into you, so to speak. There were always trophies and certificates all around in recognition of all they had done. The main topic of conversation was always record-breaking, pushing the boundaries, the future development of the Bluebird boats or cars. I was left with just a small feeling of inadequacy... I had the need to prove that this DNA ran through me as well. I had to prove to myself that I could hold my head high and be taken seriously as a Campbell."

Gina's male progenitors would surely be the first to agree that she has certainly proved herself a worthy Campbell. They

would surely also agree with the wisdom of retiring from record-breaking, despite its persistent lure, while one can still walk away.

"At this stage of my life I do not have the same drive and ambition as I had before to go and get more records. And, on a sobering note, I've seen too many friends and family members killed in the quest. But even then, that's not to say that I don't still dream about it!"

There are other projects commanding Gina's attention now that she no longer makes record attempts herself, but even these new endeavours reflect the Campbell family's history and overriding obsession with their sporting adventures.

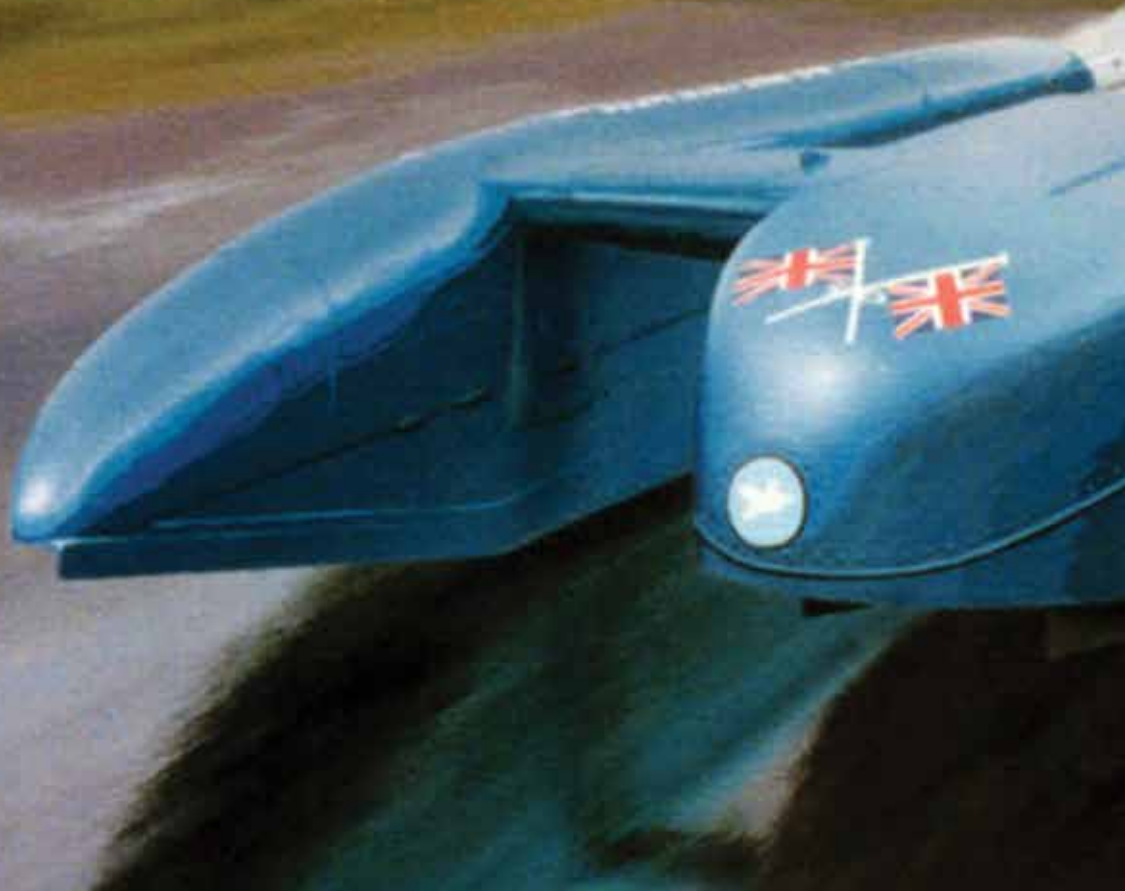
"My current personal goal is to perpetuate my family heritage. I want to do the right thing regarding the full restoration of Bluebird K7."

K7 was the hydroplane power boat in which Donald Campbell had his fatal accident on Coniston Water. The crash was devastating and Bluebird K7 broke into pieces upon its high speed impact with the water. Although divers located some wreckage they were, at the time, unable to find the main hull of the boat, and Donald himself, due to extremely poor visibility caused by silt in the water. In fact, it was not until 2000 that the main part of the craft was located.

The decision to recover Bluebird K7 was made by Gina and other members of the Campbell Family Heritage Trust, and the



Donald Campbell at the cockpit



operation to raise the wreck began in March 2001. In May of that year Donald was also finally found and brought ashore so he could be properly laid to rest by his family. The wreck recovery efforts, led by Bill Smith, were the first stage in what has become known as The Bluebird Project.

Gina was determined that Bluebird K7 should be restored to her pre-crash condition as a tribute both to her father and to British engineering. She did not wish to see the craft left *in situ* beneath the lake lest it become a target for scavengers; nor did she wish to see K7 displayed as a collection of macabre debris for the entertainment of those who are fascinated by accidents and the misfortune of others. Despite strong and vocal opposition from The Heritage Lottery Fund (who declined to fund the full restoration of K7) and other groups and individuals, Gina decided that the correct course was to rebuild her father's boat to working condition using as much as possible of its original fabric. She wanted to see Bluebird K7 run again.

"This project is a complete labour of love," Gina says. "And of sheer human drive. If anyone wishes to follow the project's



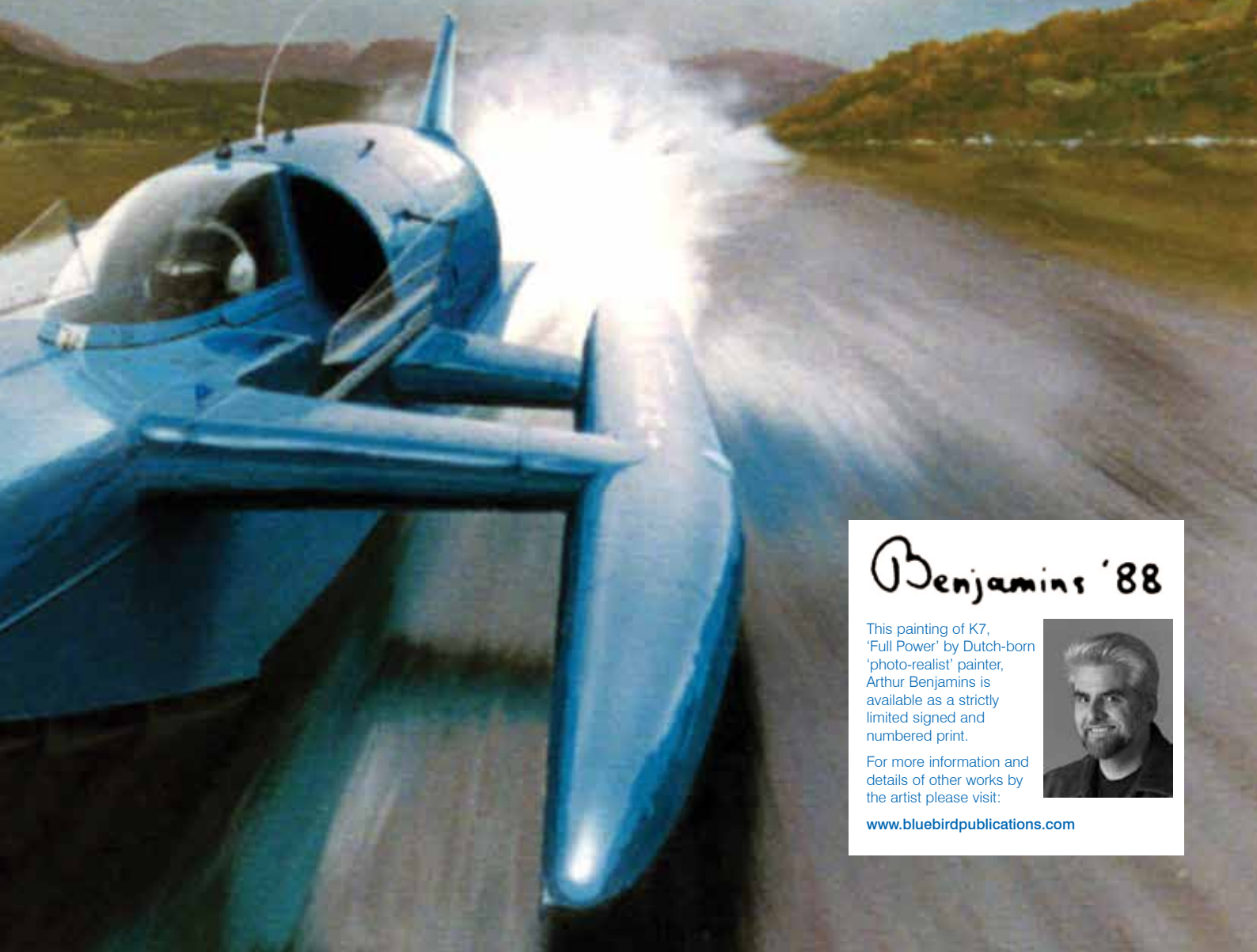
Donald and Gina en-route to the USA

progress I really do recommend that they should visit the www.bluebirdproject.com website."

We endorse Gina's recommendation. The Bluebird Project website is, in itself, an awe-inspiring achievement. The sheer

volume of information about the project, the specific engineering tasks involved, and about the history of K7, is really quite astonishing.

When the restoration is complete, it is intended that Bluebird K7 will make a



Benjamins '88

This painting of K7, 'Full Power' by Dutch-born 'photo-realist' painter, Arthur Benjamins is available as a strictly limited signed and numbered print.

For more information and details of other works by the artist please visit:

www.bluebirdpublications.com





Father and son: Sir Malcolm Campbell (right) and Donald Campbell CBE

have given all they had to have what I've inherited from my family name. Do I think I've done my family proud? Probably not enough. This is part of my inherited legacy of record breaking: you always feel that you can do more. Forever forward and upward: forever faster."

Story: Rick Cadger

Interview: Angela Banh

Additional images reproduced by kind permission of Gina Campbell

number of proving runs in 2012, possibly on Coniston Water (for which permission has already been given). After that, the historic craft will go on permanent display in the new Bluebird Wing of the nearby Ruskin Museum in Coniston.

So approaches the conclusion of a hugely important part of Gina's ongoing mission to preserve the heritage of her family and to honour the achievements and sacrifices made by her father and grandfather.

"I am humbled and so grateful that so many people from every walk of life, and from varying age groups, still appreciate that my forefathers left such a massive mark, and respect their endeavours. They certainly were very special men, and must never be forgotten.



Models of the Campbell Bluebirds commissioned by Gina

"I have been given, through good fortune of birth, the opportunity to live out a dream. There are many people who would

www.ginacampbellqso.com

www.bluebirdproject.com



Photo: Stan Thompson

K7 DAD

In addition to the inherited need for speed, Gina shares the established Campbell liking for personal number plates.

"My father had **DC 7**, his initials and the number 7 which was always important to him.

"When I saw the very similar **7 GC** going for auction a few years ago, I set my heart on it and I was very proud when I did get it. I was sad to finally part with the number, but when I saw **K7 DAD** at Regtransfers, well, I thought that only I could possibly claim it! The relevance is obviously that Bluebird K7 was the full name of my father's boat. I will always treasure it.

"I think number plates are great fun, and in some cases very apt. They can tell you a lot about the owner."

Going **Underground**



Andy Wragg bought **W28 GGY** because of his nickname, 'Wraggy' and he proudly displays it on his Mercedes A 210 Evolution.

His other plate is reserved for his prized Vespa Scooter, which he has customised to reflect the designs on Lewis Hamilton's Formula 1 racing car.



To honour his favourite band and retain his 'mod' credentials, Andy chose the superb **TH56 JAM** plate.

"I would like to thank Regtransfers for their very kind help when I purchased my beloved plates," he says.





Laura Bender Savarna Tack Aimee Portsmouth Monty Hennessy Jayne Simmonds (Manager) Elaine Russo Kelly Daflon Kylie Goodwin (Supervisor) Jessica Stapleton

Photo: Stan Thompson

Other team members not pictured: Kim Keegan (Supervisor), Claire McCool, Rebecca Page, Michelle Millard, Joe Conway and Shannon Wightwick

Through this series of articles, we hope to enable our readers to get to know Regtransfers a little better. In each issue, we feature different members of our team and, gradually, you'll become able to put names to faces.

With 60 full-time advisors, Regtransfers can boast the most comprehensive sales service in the industry.

But it's quality as well as quantity that counts and all sales enquiries are handled efficiently by people who are not only

eager to help you find your perfect number plate, but also who know the market and know number plates.

In this issue, we feature Sales Manager, **Jayne Simmonds** and her evenings team.

The Motoring **Experience**

"Nowadays, owning your own number plate is both easy and affordable."



For Ralph Parish, the fascination with number plates started when, as a 17 year old, he had just passed his driving test. This was a time when private number plates were a dreamlike aspiration to all but the very wealthy, or very lucky.

"Times have changed," says Ralph. "Nowadays, owning your own number plate is both easy and affordable."

In mid-1996, Ralph started to search for his first personalised number plate. "Ideally I would have liked **R4 LPH**," he says, "but I knew in my heart of hearts it was unlikely to become available. Even if it had been for sale, it would have been astronomically expensive."

Then, in August 1997, Ralph spotted **R4 LFH** advertised for sale privately in a well known Sunday broadsheet.

"This was just too close to my ideal number to miss," he recalls, "so I made an offer and the rest, as they say, is history."

As you can see from the photograph, Ralph currently drives a Land Rover Freelander 2 HSE.

"In my opinion, the Freelander 2 is a stunningly good vehicle of which Land Rover can be justly proud.

"Would I sell my number plate? Extremely unlikely. Certainly not in the foreseeable future. I know it sounds crazy but I'm just too attached to it now. It's become part of my motoring experience. A vehicle only becomes really mine when my personal plates are attached."

If someone asked him, would Ralph recommend the purchase of a personal number plate?

"Absolutely, but you have to be careful. Take your time and know what you want. Keep looking and, sooner or later, you will find that perfect number plate that's right for you."

The sky's the limit

Ralph Mitchell has a head for heights. He also has a head for depths. Ralph is a diver - a skydiver and a SCUBA diver! He has been skydiving for over 20 years. In that time he has completed more than 5,000 descents, which he calculates equates to a staggering 60 hours spent in free-fall.

"I have worked with the RAF, the army and the navy," says Ralph. "And I'm very lucky that it takes me all over the world.

"I've been involved in a few world firsts over the years. In 2007 I was asked to take part in an air show in Pakistan, jumping for displays. In September 2008, I was the first person to do a tandem jump adjacent to Mount Everest. At a height of 29,500 feet, that really was awesome! In 2009 I was invited to the Philippines to perform a tandem jump for their balloon festival, and I'm due to go back again to help out in the same way.

"I have been involved in some TV productions and adverts for companies such as the BBC and Sky and other, smaller production companies. I have also taught SCUBA at a school in Buckinghamshire."

Ralph lives a busy and adventurous life, which means he has to get around a fair bit.

"Last year, my journeys to and from Dunkswell airfield in Devon, where I do

most of my jumping when I'm not overseas, meant I covered over 23,000 miles in my VW Bora. I also have a motorbike in Oxfordshire for when the weather is kind, and another bike in

Devon for when I can get away on seaside trips with my girlfriend, Jane.

"For a long time I've been looking for plates for my car and my bikes. It was important to me to find plates that match my needs, and finding them on the Regtransfers website was quite exciting.

"The plate on my car, **S666 RAL**, is almost my date of birth, 2 June 1966, and it has part of my name. On my Kawasaki ZRX1200r, which I keep in Oxford, I have the number plate **K666 RAL**, and on my KLE500, which I keep down in Devon, is **T666 HEK**. That one has the initials of my children on it. In order, from eldest to youngest, they are Tristan, Hailey, Elliot and Kieran. Which gives the T and the HEK."





Steve Saunders contacted Regtransfers in December 2011 after spotting himself and his **SCS 1** number plate in our numberplates.com photo gallery. The photo to which Steve referred was black and white and clearly not recent! Steve thought we might like an update on **SCS 1**.

We actually have two old pictures of **SCS 1**: one featuring the number on a Hillman Avenger, while the other shows it on a Mini. In the Mini photo, a youthful Steve is shown posing alongside the number plate.



"The photo was taken in 1970," Steve told us. "It shows the very first car to wear **SCS 1** - in my ownership, at least. I had to think long and hard about the purchase at the time, and I ended up paying the huge amount of £125!"

Forty-one years and sixteen cars later, the plate now resides on Steve's Mercedes SL55 AMG, having been on a couple of BMWs, a Jaguar, two Corvettes plus assorted Fords and Minis.

"I am frequently asked if I am a computer geek," said Steve. *[The question no doubt prompted by the resemblance the number bears to the acronym SCSI, which refers to a kind of interface for connecting devices to computers - Ed.]* "And in answer to the other question I always get: no, I do not make my living selling sofas!"

"At the time of purchase, in 1970, I was a photographer for a group of local newspapers. In 1976 I became a photographer for a magazine group and worked on various motoring magazines. In fact, my VW Golf was used as a project car for *Street Machine* magazine, and was converted into a coupe with modified rear side windows, four rectangular headlights and strip rear lights. The car featured in the magazine and appeared at several custom car shows bearing, of course, **SCS 1**.

Fourteen states, four time zones and 5400 miles

"In 2004 when the number was attached to my first Corvette - a red C5 - I fulfilled a long-held ambition to drive from coast to coast across the USA. When the car was shipped out from Southampton to Baltimore, the shipping agents advised me to take at least two sets of number plates with me because foreign number plates are often stolen as souvenirs. The wisdom in their advice was demonstrated when I stopped for a lunch break at a cafe in deepest Kentucky. A local man had seen me drive into the car park and wanted to know where I was from. He told me he collected licence plates and had one from every state of the USA. When I left the restaurant an hour later he had added a set of British plates to his collection! I was also pulled over by a Highway Patrol Officer in Oklahoma who wanted to know where the "fancy licence

plates" came from. Luckily I had all the correct documents and my road fund licence was current. Believe it or not, even when the car is in the USA it still has to have an up to date British tax disc.

"I took six weeks to complete the trip, which included most of Route 66 and Highway 1 from San Francisco to Los Angeles, but the highlight for me was probably driving my car down The Strip in Las Vegas.

"By the time I left the Corvette at Long Beach to be shipped back to the UK I had travelled through fourteen states, four times zones and clocked up 5400 miles.

"I suspect that the next car to display **SCS 1** will be another Corvette. Good as the Mercedes is, it just hasn't got the character of a 'vette."



The Thompson Prize

In each issue, our resident photographer, Stan Thompson, nominates his favourite picture from the hundreds submitted by our readers. This time round, the winner is Steve Saunders' photo here. Steve receives a copy of our fantastic Regtransfers 2012 magazine annual.



The DEBBIE ROWLEY story

DEB 5 is the result of a successful year for Debbie Rowley's car. For the last two years it has been entered into a number of car touring events, including the famous Cannonball Run event in Europe which, over five days, aims to complete over 2500 miles at an average speed of 61 mph.

However, as Debbie's partner, Vaughn Thomas, explains,

"An unfortunate timing mistake on the last day of the first year meant we couldn't win but still managed to finish in the top ten in our 'rookie' year. Last July we conquered the Cannonball Run and returned victorious after covering France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Croatia in the fastest time of a field of 38 cars."

To celebrate the triumph and ensure the car had a makeover (which the winner gains as an automatic prize), for next year's event, Debbie decided on a radical facelift and changed the colour from black to white whilst, at the same time, giving it a more sporty styling. The result looks fantastic and, to complete the transformation, she purchased the ideal number plate from Regtransfers. 'Debs', as she is known to her many friends, can now be seen wherever the car travels. Watch out for her and her winning car **DEB 5** at a track day near you.



The World of Personal Number Plates Issue 29

Regtransfers



**Russell
Watson**

