

1961-65

SYMBOL: A lower-centre dot.

COLOURS: Black on yellow.

Whereas dark clouds had already cast their ill-omened shadows in 1956-61 over two divisions incapable of hacking it without assistance, this series was to see them further billow to jeopardise yet another pair of vulnerable categories - all this a sinister portend that the downfall of this registration system was but a wisp away. For it must have been crystal-clear to everyone by now the desperate scheme was on its deathbed and, bar a few brief defiant spasms, was condemned to pass into oblivion. Even any attempts at reconditioning plates would turn out be too much of an encumbrance as it lamely had to concede defeat and await the unstoppable apocalypse and, with it, the rising from the ashes of a drip-fed permanent alpha-numeric series.

It would only take twenty four months, by the close of 30 June 1963, for all the registrations from the various leagues of motorcycles, and so too large dealer plates, to be prodded into walking the plank and face extermination. Given a reprieve of a year were passenger, taxi, private hire and rental registrations which went on fending off the grim reaper until the same day of 1964. But back he would come, exactly twelve months later, to wipe out the remainder of those that so far had eluded his scythe. By 1 July 1965 therefore the drama was over. Transient plates had done their dash and the only thing to be sighted thereafter, for the next couple of decades, was an issue swathed in black with silver characters.

Passenger - Although registrations were to reach serial **834,500**, only 712,900 sets (counting the 1,000 for Ministers) would actually be engaged as passenger plates. The series started at **10,001** (since Private Hire and Rental had, as by today was the norm,



pilfered their respective stakes) and continued to **500,000**, all of them heading for North Island destinations. They recommenced again at **600,001** and ended at **802,500**, these making their way in their entirety to the South Island. This left a glut of 20,400 pairs which were later lapped up by any region in the nation avid for replenishments. **Appendix 11** does its bit to examine the premeditated dissemination of this issue to the 20 postal districts.

Motorcycle - Hallelujah! After ten weary years of spitting into the wind, riders were given the leeway to put away their plate making utensils safe in the knowledge they finally had legal blessing to affix just the one registration to the rear of their motorbikes. But, of the 59,999 sanctioned, here again serials took a long catnap before incarnation, this time at **40,000**.



Large Vehicle Dealer



D.1 to D6.000

Motorcycle Dealer



D.1 to D.600

Exempt - Once this division had stretched to **E99,999**, more artillery had to be amassed in the shape of **EA, EB, EC** and **ED** overflows. While each of these could



only push the envelope to 9,999 sets, it seems barely 8,000 of the **ED** array came out to graze. For, henceforth, instead of persevering with the endless treadmill of more letter-prefaced runs, it was pronounced the future ambitions of this troupe be satisfied by giving it 10,100 unused passenger plates with the serials **822,901** to **833,000**. Thus, when totted up, this overall repertoire came to an audit of 148,096 pairs.

Government - In a breakthrough finding the end was spelt for the inept **Govt** prefix



and the verdict attained to allow the **GVT** to monopolise all serials, this irrespective of their numeric content. Whereas it is documented 22,000 sets of these were pulled out of the hat, this does not align itself with

the proven existence of a pair divulging **GVT27,198**. So in this case too we must resign ourselves to the fact there must be a major inaccuracy in the official records and the true figure must lie between 28,000 and 30,000.

Heavy Vehicle - As these had previously experienced an overrun they were well up to handling surplus flows spanning from **HA** to **HE**, although the concluding one



most likely peaked at **4,000**. In all therefore an investment in the order of 143,995 sets was made.

Light Vehicle - Neither was this segment shown any mercy when it had to yield



to the challenge of **LA** to **LD** overruns where the latter possibly only extended to 4,000 pairs. This means somewhere in the ballpark of 133,996 sets were ultimately to take flight.

Bus



P.1 to P4.000

Service Vehicle

S.1 to S1.400

Taxi

T.1 to T8.000

Private Hire - These were predisposed to making off with the premier 1,000 pairs of passenger registrations while the next 500 were secreted as back-ups.



Rental - Likewise 8,000 sets of plates, with serials **1,501** to **9,500**, went down a treat here while the following 500 were also held in check as latent ammunition.



Trailer - During the last year and a half of the 1956-61 issue this mixed bag must have sent shivers down the spines of patricians at the Registrar's complex as they saw overflows go on a rampage. But that was nothing compared to the lolly scramble yet to be seen here where no less than seven supplementary runs were invoked in two



instalments. When, on 12 December 1962, it was grasped the original provision (which had terminated at **RE9,500**) was on the verge of being guzzled up, a feverish

message was sent to Precision for it to pick up where it had left off and continue to **RG7,000**. But that was not to be the end of the story. Later, when uncertainty was voiced that even this might still be insufficient to gratify trailer and caravan owners, it became vital to cannibalise another 19,700 registrations from the passenger fount but, on this occasion, divesting them from that inter-island lull not formerly intended for use. Hurting in therefore came serials **500,001** to **519,700** (inappropriately in pairs)



which, when combined with the above slugfest, implies this whole potpourri amounted to an astounding 186,693 plates.

Contract Vehicle



V.1 to V4.000

Motorcycle Learner - The hex of the black and white registrations unchained at the beginning of the last series was to torment tetchy learners for a while more when it was proclaimed their validity was being prolonged by a year. Only as of 1 July 1962 therefore would brand new, also **L** suffixed, plates appear which, although unspectacular in many regards, no doubt would have inspired howls of angst up hill and down dale all over the land. For, even though fully conscious they at last had novices by the short and curlies, governmental gurus were unable to resist the temptation to fiendishly rub salt into the wound by implanting the latest registrations with an eccentricity all of their own. Oh, to be sure, the base was still white. But it was the embossed elements thereon that made them such oddballs for they now came shaded in the most sickly and garish green hue imaginable. The only saving grace was that the life span of these 20,000 horrors was to be a miniscule one since, as alluded to in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, their use-by-date was to expire twelve months hence on 30 June of 1963.



Diplomatic - In all probability few if any deviations would have been observed between this and the past issue seeing a plates devotee remembers spotting **DPL 15A** in 1962 on a Mercedes-Benz Saloon belonging to the Chinese ambassador. Only three examples, again with no suffixes, of the 400-odd sets rounded up are accepted to still be extant.



Consular - It has been verified that, as at 21 May 1964, the following persons or consulate-owned cars had **CC** plaques (which reverted to being consistent with the colours for this issue) bolted to their ordinary passenger registrations:



Name	Country	Designation	Serial
James Leithhead	U.K.	Trade Commissioner	468,134
Donald P. Dick	U.K.	Assistant Trade Commissioner	461,070
U.S. Consulate, Auckland	U.S.A.		488,946
Edwin Modill	U.S.A.	Consul	808,866
William Beyer	U.S.A.	Vice-Consul	467,607
Mrs. D. Wilson	U.S.A.	Wife of Consul	207,130
Australian Consulate, Auckland	Australia		490,135
Jean Morey	Australia	Chief Commissioner	484,398

Government Agencies - The State Insurance Office formally came into being in 1963 at which time the SIO plaques would have been developed (inexplicably in white on black) while the annulled SFI ones now soared off to that great scrap heap in the sky.



Exempt Trailer - By the time all 99,999 plates had been devoured, this series was absolutely on its last legs so no contemplation was directed at attempting an overrun. Anyway, the structure of the prefix did not realistically encourage the integration of another letter. Instead this caste was also induced to make a foray into the fallow fields of the passenger selection from whence it sponged 1,500 plates with serials **833,001** to **834,500**, although no birdie has yet told us if these were paired.



Exempt Motorcycle - Remarkably, within a system already in rack and ruin and collapsing like the proverbial Tower of Babel, it was mulishly elected to shoot out one last variant. Just why this was so is mind numbing, especially when one is told a piddling 100 registrations were dredged up. More extraordinary is that this was done in two lots where each, we have been alerted, cost a full-blown £2 11s 1d. The first 50, the same size as their private buddies but prefixed by a 2½ inch high **E**, accompanied the rest of the general issue on 1 July 1961. And then, on 12 July 1962, Precision was asked to come up with the other 50 plates with serials **E51** to **E100**.



Post Script

For ready reference [Appendix 12](#) sums up the number of registrations, by category, manufactured for the 21 series from 1925/26 to 1961-65. Similarly, [Appendix 13](#) spells out the significance of, and legality dates, of all the prefixes and suffixes encountered during the same period. And [Appendix 14](#) goes on to present some other plate articles made by Precision who, during the war years, also produced munitions (including six million parts for hand grenades, 1000 Sten guns together with fuel tanks for Moth aeroplanes). In 1964 the company became a subsidiary of Alex Harvey Industries (AHI) and began specialising in steel equipment (filing cabinets, lockers, shelving, etc.) for offices, factories and warehouses.

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