

1940/41

SYMBOL: A triangle at lower centre.

COLOURS: White on dark (Venetian) red.

Fatefully this was to be the last annual series thanks to the mayhem in Europe. With all the future consternations Precision was to confront when striving to muster adequate amounts of steel, the indulgence of equipping the motoring fraternity with new plates every year was put to the sword and joined the dodo. Even as this issue came to the final weeks of its predestined existence, whispers abounded it might have to hang on for longer than the conventional twelve months as the company had been drained of the fundamental raw material and restocking was proving a real tribulation. But all the gossip came to nix when Precision countered things were not quite as touch and go as the pessimists were inferring for, not so long ago, it had indeed successfully inveigled from England the metal necessary for the manufacture of next year's series, plans for which were presently well under way.

Passenger - Available for perusal in [Appendix 6](#) is the augured dispersal of the 220,500 pairs to each of the 18 postal districts but again this should be ingested with



a grain of salt. And, in what by now had become par for the course, serials **1** to **2000** were ambushed by the Private Hire and Rental ensembles.

Motorcycle



.1 to 19.100

Large Vehicle Dealer - 1,800 sets came on line which henceforth were also to be attributable to tow trucks, car transporters, the proprietors of transport museums, car wreckers, vehicle ferrymen and repairers.

Motorcycle Dealer - Everything went swimmingly for 200 pairs.

Exempt

E.1 to E7.400

Government

Govt.1 to Govt5.000

Heavy Vehicle - Since 1925 every trucker had been made to stare down the barrel of a road tariff compiled from his unit's weight plus its most proficient loading capacity. Judging this not to be sufficiently punitive, Parliament elbowed in once more in 1932 when it used every trick in the book to impede any more blooming of the industry. Simultaneously owners were made to jump through hoops as reams of statutes were hurled at them whose ends it was to incapacitate their widespread activities and even what sorts of thoroughfares they could drive on. All this because the molly-coddled, Government managed, railways had buckled under the competitive strain springing from the private sector and their waning fortunes had given rise to veritable financial anguish.

With this issue mercantile conveyors were again caught in the cross hairs of yet more legislation. Not content they were already displaying indication-discs (a must since 1932) with enough twaddle to fill a lexicon, it was now proclaimed they also had to fasten a plaque to one end of their **H** prefaced plates (of which 22,400 sets were parcelled out that year). The same size as



the red **L** fixtures foisted last year on madcap motorcycle learners, each contained a letter between **A** and **Q** which correlated to the overall load each contrivance had sanction to transport. And those same initials, apart from the additional **Q**, was a spitting image of the code first observed in 1925 when an Act of Parliament had sponsored a scale by which to categorise trucks according to their defined tolerable weight limits and the resultant road taxes applicable (see [Appendix 7](#)).

To become popularly known as weight class plates, the early ones were coloured black on fawn. However many successive runs over the years (markedly of the primary letters) was to see the base take on many shades - among them some where it came close to a dark orange. Also, because of their logo, it can be seen Precision was responsible for shaping most of them but it is obvious at least two other shops collaborated at some juncture. The products of one of these are instantly identifiable as the plaques are a speck larger, have bright yellow backgrounds and are made of porcelain.



Plainly the intention behind the plaques' de rigueur exposure was to make life less laborious for those policing such matters. As of now these eager beavers would be able to work out - by means of a perfunctory glance and from afar - what maximum weight every truck traversing their sights had compliance to be carrying based on the character in full view next to the registration. Important too they could unobtrusively establish whether the appliance in question was entitled to be proceeding along that precise road depending on how the latter had been classified. Seemingly the plaque pestilence lingered on until mid 1956 when it petered out and went into retirement.

Light Vehicle



L.1 to L28.400

Bus - There is graphic endorsement a few urban commuter buses also had to swallow their pride and juxtapose weight class plates to some of the 800 pairs of registrations elicited that year. Whereas normally there would have been no duress for them to become implicated with the plaques in this manner, evidently some of these carriers - principally on holidays and weekends - were given the go-ahead to be chartered by clubs and other civic organisations. Interestingly, once occupied in this sideline, they promptly metamorphosed - albeit for just a relatively brief stint - into a service coach and as such would have had to be guided by the rules governing their long-haul cousins.

Service Vehicle - Although 850 sets came out of the blocks, not all would be subsequently manacled to an alphabetic plaque. For, since 1925 (**not** 1932 when **S** plates were introduced), this category had led a dinkum schizophrenic life as it invariably found itself falling into the vacuum between trucks and buses whose road charge commitments had always been calculated using contradictory equations. Hence a service car's ultimate destiny always lay in whichever of the two fee paying computations was the greater for that would forever resolve whether its definition was to come under the auspices of a truck or a bus.



On this occasion therefore only those dual-purpose conveyances that had been bullied into signing up as trucks were to be besieged by the little weight class plates. And, ironically, this was also germane to any bus moonlighting as a coach which, while so transformed, might atypically find itself playing the role of a truck as an upshot of how the road levy assessment had panned out.

Taxi



T.1 to T2.200

Private Hire - Giving currency to the reality the nation was in the thick of military hostilities, only 300 pairs from the passenger dollop were meted out while another 200 were kept on stand-by.



Rental - Serials **501** to **1,200** were assented to where again the diminished allotment of a mere 700 sets echoed the European upheaval then well under way. But, to be on the safe side, the next 800 plates were put on the back burner in case of a rainy day (which, incidentally, never came).

Trailer



R.1 to R13.300

Contract Vehicle



V.1 to V2.100

Diplomatic - If it was okay for the United Kingdom High Commission's vehicles to traipse around with flamboyant registrations, so too it should be, consistent with top level altruism, for those in the possession of the other two embassies then in New Zealand with British Commonwealth connections. After all, along with this country, were they not all on the same side in this infernal war?

Whereas **U.K.H.C.** plates had been consented to during the last registration year, so similar ones were now to come on their coattails to adorn the cars, again both official and private, owned by the Australian and Canadian delegations in Wellington. These too were festooned with professionally painted gold letters on a black backdrop.



There is verbal substantiation a plate was once glimpsed in the capital emblazoned with **C.H.C. 4** which was on a Chevrolet being driven by a Canadian envoy - although it must be confessed this was only in 1946. But regrettably so far no old timer has yet come forward to authenticate ever having chanced upon a registration with an **A.H.C.** which, if he had, would in its day undoubtedly have been secured to a sedan the property of the Australian High Commission.

[PREVIOUS CHAPTER](#)

[NEXT CHAPTER](#)

[MAIN MENU](#)