

A TRIP DOWN MOTORING LANE

When German inventor Karl Benz invented the first petrol driven motor car in 1888 he had designed a completely new means of transport. The new powered vehicle immediately became subject to legal controls. One early law said that all cars had to have a crew of three which, included someone to walk in front with a red flag as a warning to pedestrians, other traffic and to calm frightened horses.

1903

- Local councils are made responsible for driver and vehicle licensing.
- The first driving licence is introduced and costs five shillings (25p). The licence is valid for one year. A driving licence is given to anyone who applies. No driving test or check on medical fitness is required. Minimum age for riding motorcycles is 14, and 17 for other vehicles.
- Fines are introduced for driving unlicensed vehicles.

1910

- The road fund is introduced as the form of vehicle tax.
- Annual and quarterly vehicle licensing is introduced.

1920

- The term owner presented legal difficulties. It is decided that the name and address of the person keeping the vehicle would appear on the log book.

1957-1959

- A three year driving licence is introduced to replace the former one-year licence.

1939-1946

- Driving tests are suspended during the war.

1935

- Driving tests are made compulsory and cost 7s 6d (37.5p).
- Heavy goods vehicles (HGV) and provisional licences are introduced over the next two years.

1963

- Use of a letter to identify a vehicles year of first registration is introduced to cope with the increase in vehicle numbers and improve customer protection.


1965

- The number of vehicles and drivers is increasing dramatically. Local authorities are unable to cope with vehicle registrations. The Government plans to centralise the system and planning begins for what is to become Driver Vehicle Licensing Centre (DVLC).

1969

- Swansea in South Wales is chosen as the location for DVLC, supported by a network of 81 Local Vehicle Licensing Offices (LVLOs).

1983

- End of the line for the suffix letter format of registration marks. Prefix letter format is now introduced together with 'Q' marks for vehicles of indeterminate age.
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1976

- Long period driving licences that last until the holder's 70th birthday are introduced for car drivers.

1974

- DVLC and the LVLO network begin operating. DVLC is responsible for maintaining the central vehicle record, issuing driving licences, vehicle registration documents and licensing reminders, paying VED refunds and enforcing payment of VED. LVLOs are responsible for the registration of new and imported vehicles, issue of vehicle licences and local enforcement work. Post Offices take on routine vehicle licensing.
- The old red book driving licence is replaced by a computer produced document.
- Reflective number plates are required

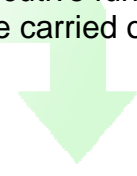
1984

- A new vehicle computer system is installed at DVLC. Efficiency is increased and a direct computer link between Swansea and the Local Office Network is established.
- DVLC complies with requirements of the Data Protection Act, to maintain security of the information held on its record.

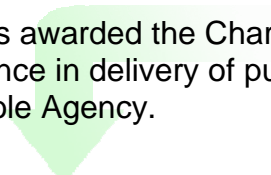
1985

- Local Vehicle Licensing Offices (LVLOs) are now re-named Vehicle Registration Offices (VROs). The network is rationalised to 53 offices.
- 95% of all vehicle licence applications now handled by the Post Office.

1988

- The Government Efficiency Unit recommends that executive functions of government should be carried out by 'Executive Agencies'.
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1993

- DVLA is awarded the Charter Mark for excellence in delivery of public services for the whole Agency.
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1990

- DVLC becomes an 'Executive Agency' of the Department of Transport. DVLC is now known as DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency).

1989

- DVLC starts to offer for sale certain un-issued registration marks through the Sale of Marks scheme.

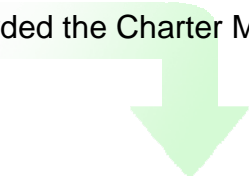
1994

- DVLA is named Employer of the Year for its family friendly policies.

1995

- Automated First Registration and Licensing (AFRL) enables car dealers to issue a licence disc when selling a brand new vehicle. VROs are rationalised to 40.

1996

- DVLA is awarded the Charter Mark for a second time.
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1999

- For the third time in succession, DVLA is awarded the Charter Mark for excellence in the delivery of public services for the whole Agency.
- DVLA wins an Innovation Award Trophy in the 'Service to Business' category for the AFRL project.
- DVLA Sale of Marks receipts reach a record £47.2 million.
- DVLA achieves Investor in People accreditation. The liP award is nationally recognised as the benchmark for best practice in training and development to support business systems.
- The vehicle computer system introduced in the early 1970's is replaced.
- The age identification letter on number plates now changes every six months, in March and September
- A pilot scheme in association with Norwich Union is set up to allow customers to re-licence their vehicles by telephone. This type of scheme will be available more widely when MoT and insurance databases are completed.
- DVLA operates a pilot scheme in conjunction with four police forces to report unregistered vehicle keepers. ACPO Traffic Committee endorsed the scheme for a phased national rollout to all police force areas.

1998

- The Agency begins the phased introduction of photocard driving licences. Successful driving test candidates are the first to receive the new credit card style plastic cards.
- DVLA's Welsh Language scheme is formally approved.
- DVLA's Fleets re-licensing scheme wins the prestigious Pricewaterhouse Coopers Award for innovation.
- The new Data Protection Act is passed. It will become law in March 2000. It will apply to manual records from 24 October 2001.

1997

- The wheel clamping scheme is introduced to crack down on VED evaders.
- Dual notification is introduced. Both seller and buyer of a vehicle are required to notify DVLA of the change.
- Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) is introduced. This is designed to improve record accuracy and reduce excise duty evasion.
- DVLA complies with the requirements of the European Council second Directive on driving licences which harmonises minimum ages and medical standards for drivers.

2000

- Photocard driving licence phase-in completed: paper licences cease to be issue.
- Over the counter service for checking driving licence applications introduced at DVLA Local Offices and at select Post Offices.

2005

- The Sale of Personalised Registrations Scheme raised £1 billion for the Treasury since its introduction.
- DVLA is awarded the Charter Mark for the fifth time.
- DVLA starts issuing digital tachograph smart cards.

2001

- In September a new number plate format is introduced. It is designed to last until the middle of the 21st century.

2004

- Introduction of the V5C registration certificate, designed in accordance with EC Directive 1999/37/EC. The V5C registration certificate replaces the V5 registration document.
- The new system of continuous registration was introduced, to help combat vehicle excise duty evasion and vehicle crime and enhance the accuracy of DVLA records. DVLA become able to enforce against the keepers of unlicensed vehicles from the record, without needing to see the vehicle on the road.
- DVLA introduces a pilot offering selected customers two new channels for licensing vehicles via the telephone or Internet.
- DVLA began a pilot to issue Certificates of Destruction. Authorised Treatment Facilities (ATFs) are able to notify DVLA electronically that a vehicle has been destroyed and issue a Certificate of Destruction to the last holder/ owner of the vehicle. Full rollout to sites permitted by the Environment Agency has now begun.
- Post Office® will start accepting change of tax class transactions into the disabled tax class only.

2002

- Introduction of four bands of Vehicle Excise Duty for Motorcycles ranging from £15 for engines up to 150cc to £60 for those above 600cc.
- DVLA is awarded the Charter Mark for the fourth time.
- Instant access to drivers data is available on the Police National Computer for use in road traffic policing.

2003

- Introduction of Mandatory V5 scheme. Introduced as a package of measures aimed at reducing vehicle crime. Applications for a vehicle licence not presented with a V11 must be supported by the Vehicle Registration Document V5/V5/2.
- Re-designed tax disc produced to include enhanced security features and including a barcode to support the Barcoding of All Relicensing Transactions (BART).
- DVLA introduces the Barcoding All Relicensing Transactions (BART) system. Under BART, licensing information is passed electronically to DVLA from Post Office Ltd with records being updated within 2-4 days instead of up to six weeks under the previous paper system.