

Vehicle Licensing

Dundee City Archives - Research Guide 10

Background

The registration of motor vehicles began in 1903. This became the responsibility of the local councils. Some vehicles had been registered from 1896 but this was not enforced until after the 1903 Motor Act. Each county was allocated an index mark of two letters, which was followed by a unique number e.g. AD 1234. Vehicles could be registered anywhere in the UK, not necessarily with the local council. Separate registers were kept for motorcycles, cars and goods vehicles between 3 and 5 tons. The system was altered slightly in 1921. Vehicles now had to be registered with the local council and only one register was kept for all vehicles.

When councils ran out of unique numbers, they were to add a third letter at the beginning, followed by 3 numbers only, e.g. ATS 123. The letters I, Q and Z were not used. In the 1950s, when these unique marks ran out, councils were to reverse the order – numbers followed by the letters, e.g. 123 ATS. In 1963 an extra letter which changed every year was added. The letter A was issued for 1963, but many councils didn't change to the new system until 1964, so there are no A registrations, e.g. ATS 123 B. In 1967, the date the letter changed was moved from January 1st to August 1st (so the mark E only covers 7 months). Although the responsibility for issuing registrations began to move to the centralised DVLA in 1969, this was not fully completed until 1974.

Dundee was issued with the letters TS and YJ. Angus was issued with the letters SR

Please note that the Records for Perth (ES) and Kinross-shire (SV) are now held by Perth and Kinross Archives.

What Records are there?

The Vehicle Registration Records for Dundee and Angus are held under the reference GD/VR.

The only records that exist are the vehicle registers. These contain the date of registration, the name and address of the registered owner, type of vehicle and engine size.

Dundee (TS and YJ) 1904-1981 (GD/VR/2/1-13)

Angus (SR) 1903-1915 and 1919-1974 (GD/VR/1/1 –17)

Please note that the registers do not include the engine number. This is the information that the DVLA requires to re-register a vehicle. As this information is not included, this may not be enough information for the DVLA. Please contact them directly for further information.

If you would like to request a copy of the original registration of a vehicle, please contact us. Alternatively you are welcome to visit the Archives to view the registers in person.