

Sex change driver wins licence back

MAGISTRATES lifted a three-year driving ban on a nuclear engineer today after hearing a sex change had ended his drinking problem.

George Seward was banned in June 1977 after crashing with more than twice the legal limit of alcohol in his blood. It was his second driving ban.

But when Seward appeared before magistrates at Newport Pagnell, Bucks, today it was as Miss Jenny Seward.

She told the court: "I was drinking very heavily in an effort to establish my masculinity. I tried to be one of the boys."

"I have had this trouble for a very long time, ever since I can remember. But now I have no problems at all in this respect."

Miss Seward, of Flaunden Lane, Bovington, Herts, was wearing a black cardigan, skirt and red high-heeled shoes, earrings and beads. Her brown hair was short and curly. She spoke with a deep voice.

Fined

Mr Peter Butler, for the police, said the accident which led to the mandatory three-year ban happened at Sherrington, Bucks.

Seward's Rover ran on to the verge, then across the road and up a bank. Helped by passers-by, he tried to drive off, but the car was too badly damaged.

He refused a breath test, but a blood sample showed he had 173 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood. He was fined £150 in addition to the ban.

Nearly six years earlier he had been fined £35 and disqualified for a year for a drink-drive offence.

Mr Laurence Marshall, for Seward, said she had to travel to remote nuclear establishments which was difficult without a car. She

earned £6000 to £8000-a-

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year as managing director for CSW Engineering Limited, which employed about 25 people and had an annual turnover of £250,000.

Mr Marshall added: "Mr Seward was leading a wholly different life to that which she is leading now."

"Because of this difficulty, she has lost orders and now runs only one company instead of three."

"When Mr Seward appeared before you, he was a very sick man. He was suffering from a desire no longer to be a man."

"He was under stress and there is no doubt he was drinking heavily."

"Mr Seward came to terms with himself and realised he could not go on in this way. He became fully transsexual."

"His marriage has gone. One can imagine the hurt through which she has been and the great deal of courage it takes to put herself in the public eye and come before you."

"She now drinks only a glass of sherry now and again and her whole life is completely different."

Uncommon

Magistrates chairman Mrs Margaret Durbridge said: "It is very uncommon to remove disqualifications in cases of this sort, but we do feel this is exceptional. Circumstances have changed and we are going to remove the disqualification."