

WOULD YOU WEAR A SINGLE'S BADGE?

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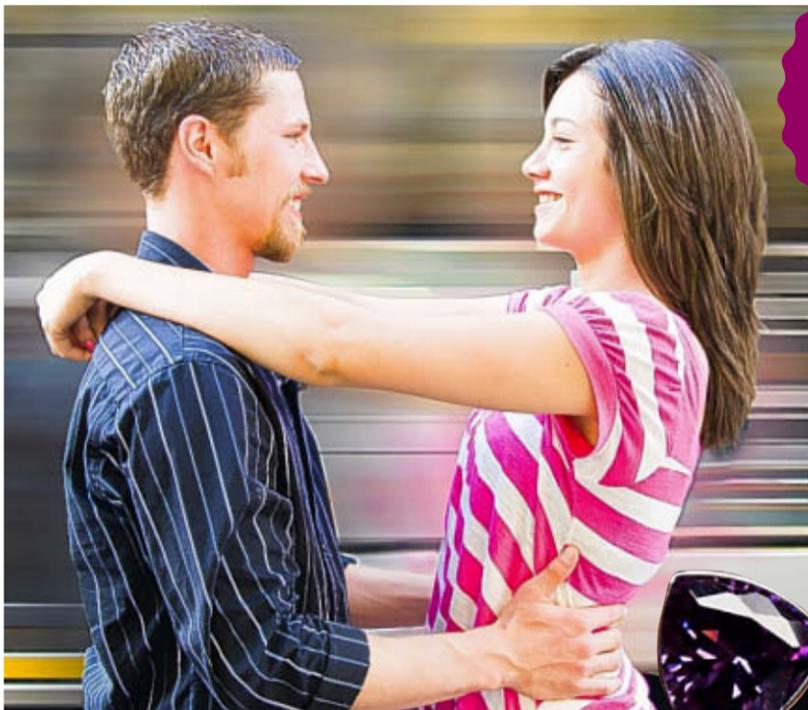
Brooch the subject of romance: Amy and Brett (right) were two of the few spotted wearing the Singlepin



AMY



BRETT



PIN DOWN A LOVE MATCH

A badge to let others know that you are single? **Charly Lester** gives it a whirl

MOST people wearing a badge in London are telling you they've got a 'Baby On Board!' But no longer – because there's a new badge for singletons. Now you can literally wear your heart on your sleeve and let everyone know you're available. Given that virtual dating is the norm these days, this sounds quite daunting, but Singlepin is hoping to enchant those of us who have fallen out of love with swiping left by connecting us with some IRL (that's In Real Life!) romance.

Singlepin is the brainchild of artist Dianne Harris, who began selling the badges as a reaction to her experiences of online dating. Harris hopes to offer singles a talking point to make meeting in real life easier. The premise is simple: you wear a shield-shaped gem on your collar to show the world that you're single and looking. And then you keep an eye out for others wearing the badge. At £15 each, they aren't cheap, but you could argue they're a bargain compared with many online dating subscriptions.

And so I pinned a badge to my collar and went about my London life. I have to admit the idea of a badge was less scary having seen them. They're quite attractive and I realised the only people who would know what it was were likely to be other singles. I spotted my first Singlepin wearer while in my local supermarket – Amy, a 32-year-old hairdresser. She was given her badge by a friend as a gift.

'It does look nice as a piece of jewellery,' she said. 'I think the price is fairly expensive, but it's good quality

and I don't feel embarrassed. It would be nice to see more people using them – it's a good talking point and if I saw a guy wearing one, I would talk to him. But so far I've only spotted people wearing them on the train, which can be tough as people are getting on and off and it's hard to get chatting.'

Fair point, I think, as I jump on a crowded Tube. Talking to someone is about timing and it can be difficult to get chatting to someone if there are too many others around. As I sit in the crowded carriage, one thing I notice is the badge is making me look up more. Rather than burying my head in my book, I'm actively looking around the Tube.

As the week progresses, I see a few more girls wearing Singlepins but still no men. Then I spot one! I'm on my way back from after-work drinks. Maybe it's the deserted Overground train. Or maybe it's just that it's Thursday night and I'm a bit tipsy, but I spy a guy wearing the badge and go over to talk to him. Brett is 28 and he's just signed up to online dating but decided to buy a badge at the same time. No, it's not love at first sight, but it makes a change to actually talk to a stranger on a train and we enjoy a bit of badge-related banter.

The badge may not have found me love, but it does make me feel like a member of a cool secret club and I will be keeping it on my coat. After all, it could pin down the man of my dreams.

Charly Lester aka @30dates is founder of the UK Dating Awards, ukdatingawards.com



Pin it to win it: Singlepin looks like jewellery

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