

## NOT A NINE TO FIVE JOB!

In 1979, Patricia Stanley was working a nine-to-five job and looking for a way to break free. Around that time she watched the Jack Rosenthal play 'The Knowledge' in which the characters go through the process of becoming a Licensed London Taxi Drivers, she felt inspired enough to give it a go. Today, Pat is a licensed taxi driver in London, driving a distinctive Asquith taxi. She owns this striking replica of a 1932 London Taxi which was built to order by the Asquith Motor Carriage Company. On stopping for a passenger, the Asquith taxi provokes some reaction. The first question is: "Is this a real taxi?" The next question is: "Is this more expensive?" The answers are "yes" then "no" to the questions!

Patricia takes up the story. "I was still working when I started the Knowledge, I learnt to ride a motorcycle, because that is the quickest way to get around London and take note of everything. I also had to learn to drive a car and pass my test before I passed the knowledge.

"I fitted my learning of the 'runs' in with my job, by going out very early mornings before work, also evenings and weekends. I joined a Knowledge school. I also recorded the 'runs' onto tape, which helped immensely, and instead of listening to music; I would listen to the 'runs'. Boring it may sound, but I did pass the Knowledge within 11 months." Patricia recommends that anyone who has applied to the Public Carriage Office for the Knowledge of London considers joining one of the capital's Knowledge Schools'. "These schools offer independent guidance, resource tools and training for people who are studying to become a Licensed London Taxi Drivers. They also offer the opportunity to meet and study with students at all levels."

Pat says that for her, one of the best things about being a taxi driver is that it gives her the freedom to work the hours she wants to. She wants to encourage more women to become London Licensed Taxi Drivers. She says that women with children will find the job is perfectly adaptable to their children's needs; also, women passengers appreciate having a woman driver. In a recent interview with The Metro, Patricia described her job to try and encourage more women to become taxi drivers. There is an on going campaign by TfL to encourage recruits for the Knowledge. Unfortunately, due to lack of space The Metro article did not include another of Patricia's passions – The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers and the



Patricia Stanley at last year's Big Breakfast send off

annual Magical Taxi Tour.

Not only was Patricia one of the first female Licensed London Taxi Drivers, she is the first elected female Master of the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers. Back in 2004, The Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers became the 104th City Livery Company. Many of the Livery Companies date back to the 12th and 1300th century. The Fellowship of Hackney Coachmen's, history began in 1654 by act of Parliament of Cromwell's Protectorate. Unfortunately it was discovered that Cavaliers had been allowed to join the fellowship. Cromwell issued an order to Lord Chief Baron, Recorder of London, to investigate the admission of Cavaliers

to the Fellowship. In June 1657 Cromwell signed an order revoking the Ordinance of the Fellowship, and it was disbanded until 1990.

Pat has taken part in many of the annual Magical Taxi Tours taking sick and terminally ill children on the trip of a lifetime to Disneyland Paris and led the convoy from Canary Wharf last September. Pat has enjoyed her year as Master of the Company and is looking forward to this year's Disneyland trip.



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