

TAXI
GLOBE



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YOUNGEST TAXI DRIVER LICENSED

Casey MacLaren was licensed as a London taxi driver on 1st April - the youngest driver to be licensed to date, as he celebrated his 21st birthday on 31st March 2008. In July 2007, Casey completed and passed the Knowledge in July 2007 but was not legally allowed to be licensed as a taxi driver until he turned 21.

Taxi driving must be in his blood as his father is an All-London taxi driver and his mother holds a Suburban taxi driver licence. Casey says he chose the career because of the flexibility, which will allow him to continue to pursue his football career. He said: "I have seen how my parents are their own bosses and are able to fit in other responsibilities around working as taxi drivers - it works really well. I think it is also a rewarding career which allows you to



meet people from all walks of life, and I am looking forward to taking the wheel." Casey currently plays football for Hendon FC and from time to time gets back on his Moped to keep his knowledge of London up-to-date. He is planning on getting his own TX4 taxi after a few months of renting one and says it will definitely be black.

Transport for London's Director of Taxi and Private Hire, Ed Thompson, said: "As well as Casey, a young woman of 22 has recently been licensed. It gives us so much pleasure to see young people choosing taxi driving as a career. We hope they have a long career ahead of them." The second youngest taxi driver is 22 year old Natalia Shalom. She was licensed in July 2007 and holds an All-London badge.

DIAL-A-CAB 2008 LISTENING GROUP VISITS LTI

Ten drivers from Dial-a-Cab visited LTI vehicles earlier this month to take part in a Listening Group. Alan Fisher, editor of Call Sign, DAC in-house magazine, organises a group of Dial-a-Cab drivers each year to visit the factory and to discuss trade issues with the LTI team. The group discussed the TX4 and a range of other London trade matters.

The Listening Groups programme was set up to take feedback from drivers on their vehicle and to consider ideas for future improvements to the London taxi. Matthew Cheyne, International Market Development Director, briefed the group on developments in China and the potential for sourcing parts from China – a

key aim for the business in 2008 and beyond. Trevor Hattersley, Customer and Technical Support Manager, took questions from drivers on a range of issues from servicing to improvements to the TX4. Richard Daniels, Government Affairs Manager, hosted the visit and discussed the importance for the company to reduce emissions.

The group also took a factory tour and viewed the work underway to install a new press, an investment in the plant of circa £375,000. The tour gave the Dial-a-Cab drivers an excellent insight into the work that goes into producing the London taxi and the day was an overwhelming success.

COMCAB AT THE BUSINESS TRAVEL SHOW

February saw the business Travel Show take place at Earls Court and despite fears surrounding the economy, visitor numbers were encouraging. The business travel industry has been preparing itself for a bumpy year but if the show was anything to go by things weren't looking too bad although clearly many exhibitors are expecting corporate spend to slow as the year continues.

Computer Cab plc were again exhibiting, the only one of the three main London radio circuits to do so and their new larger stand drew plenty of attention and generated plenty of new business opportunities. Malcolm Paice, Head of Operations at Computer Cab plc said: "We have a long history of attending this show and it is a crucial touch point for us to liaise with our existing client base and also to source new business. The attendance is strong and we are delighted to have such a good presence here. Business users come here expecting to see innovation and forward thinking and we are very strong in these areas. Our stand this year showcases not just our London services but also our national and international transport services and of course the Advantage system is also a major draw. Customers can see our investment in

technology is what keeps us at the top of our game."

The show this year had a distinct increase in the number of 'one-stop-shop' taxi and executive car services on display, proving that the ability to handle all of a customer's transport requirements is what the industry demands. Single points of booking and the ability to link up a number of taxi and private hire suppliers is the focus area for many businesses now and this was apparent in the number of exhibitors offering this service.

Business class airlines and a range of concierge services were all in abundance as usual but cost savings are clearly at the forefront of many minds with the economic outlook still decidedly gloomy. Firms which offered solutions to reduce overseas mobile call costs and 'premium economy' services were notably popular with the purchasing departments of many corporate business keen to make as many trims to their expenditure as possible.

Many executive private hire car firms also seemed to have excluded themselves from this year's show and those who were present were perhaps a bit more conservative than in previous years, keen to sell themselves at every range of the market rather than purely high end.