

## RECORD FLEET SALES FIGURES FOR M&O LONDON

March saw a great level of sales at M&O London. They have hit a single-month sales record of 60 new 08-registered TX4's delivered to the capital's rental fleet operators. Many fleets are now upgrading their Fairway and TX1 taxis.

Taking delivery of the 60th TX4 was Jason Chillmaid, owner of Hackney-based J&J taxis. "I'm delighted to be improving my fleet with the TX4," said Jason.

"This will be the third TX4

that I've purchased this month, adding to the firm's fleet of 100 vehicles. It enables J&J taxis to keep up with current trends and to provide my drivers with the best vehicle for the job. The TX4 allows London's drivers to pick up passengers in improved safety and comfort."

Peter Rigden, General Manager at M&O London, said: "This new fleet sales record reflects a successful first quarter for the next-generation London taxi. It has been

achieved through a variety of promotions launched by M&O including low rate finance deals and an unprecedented Fairway / Metrocab replacement offer. We will continue to work hard to offer our customers the best fleet service and support to ensure this success continues throughout the year."

For further information about M&O London call 020 7700 0888 or visit [www.mannandoverton.com](http://www.mannandoverton.com)



Left, Simon Brauns, Fleet Sales Executive at M&O London presents keys to Jason Chillmaid, owner of J&J Taxis.

## THE YOUNGEST DRIVER EVER ON DAC

by Alan Fisher, editor of Call Sign

On 1st April, Casey MacLaren was licensed as a London taxi driver - the youngest driver to be licensed to date. Drivers can be licensed to study the KoL when they are 18 and that is what Dial-a-Cab's youngest ever driver of either sex, Natalia Shalom (A34) did.

Natalia has now been on DaC for over 6 months and will celebrate her 22nd birthday at the end of May. She got her licence in July 2007 and came to DaC just a few weeks later. "I work well into the early hours and knew that it would be much safer to be on radio," Natalia told Call Sign, Dial-a-Cab's in house magazine.



"So after speaking to many cabbies, I decided that Dial-a-Cab was the best circuit to join. In addition, my boyfriend Daniel Woodhouse joined several months earlier and also told me how good it was here. Now much of my work is on account." Alan Fisher editor of Call Sign said: "Just save any drivers asking, the lovely Natalia and ultra-lucky Daniel live together and Natalia seems pretty sure that their future will be tied up together!"

In an era when the Knowledge seems to be taking an average according to the PCO of 3.5 years, Natalia completed it in just 2 months over 2 years. She began to study the KoL because Daniel was on it and she always helped by calling over with him. Driving a London taxi might not seem the type of career a young girl would look at but Natalia said: "Everyone asks me why I wanted to pursue this career. Before he did the Knowledge, Daniel - who is 6 years older than Natalia - was a salesman at M&O (London) so I suppose it was a natural progression for him to think about the KoL, but I was in and out of jobs that gave me little or no satisfaction. Hairdressing and admin jobs can be very satisfying

for some, but I just wanted something else. Wives and girlfriends of drivers I'd spoken to told me that the Knowledge wasn't for a young girl and neither was the end product. But I think that must have spurred me on!"

Natalia has no fearsome stories about the PCO, believing that they treated her fairly and in a pleasant way. "I had my bad appearances and 'Ds' like everyone else, but on the whole I feel I was treated fairly." Although Natalia often meets Daniel for a snack, they both work until the very early hours - sometimes as late as 4am. Call Sign asked her how safe

she felt picking up 2 or 3 young lads at 2am who perhaps began acting a bit flash when realising they had a young, attractive female driver? And does she worry about her mode of dress for work? After all, a male driver wearing some kind of shorts might get stared at, but a young female cabbie wearing a skimpy top and miniskirt would present a totally different image.

"I've had very few problems," said Natalia, "although I do get some stares as people realise that their driver is a young girl! But I'm careful what clothes I go out in. I work on the assumption that whatever I would wear to go out on a Saturday afternoon when I'm not working is ok to wear whilst driving the cab. But I wouldn't wear anything in the cab that I might wear for socialising on a Saturday evening, so no very low tops or miniskirts. But the bottom line is that because such a large proportion of my work is on account, I get few problems. I think it's also important to remember that most people are fine and so long as you are pleasant to them, there are no problems. I won't take any rubbish from passengers, but if I was really concerned about something, then I've got radio back-up..."

## LTI VEHICLES ARE OPEN TO DISCUSSIONS

As LTI Vehicles continues with its Listening Groups programme, taxi drivers get the opportunity to discuss trade issues with the LTI management team. Most recently a group from Dial-a-Cab visited the factory in Coventry and gave their feedback on their vehicle and to discuss ideas for the future development of the London taxi.

During these organised sessions also allow LTI to brief groups on operational issues such as the ongoing developments in China, their commitment to remain with the VM engine and the firm's strategy to reduce vehicle emissions. Rob Laidler, Sales Director at LTI Vehicles, said: "It's important that we listen to our customers so that we can continue to build on the success of the iconic TX4 taxi. The Listening Groups programme was put in place many years ago to do just that. It also provides drivers with an opportunity to see at first hand the tremendous amount of work that goes into building the vehicle."

Drivers wanting to find out more should call LTI Vehicles on 024 7657 2000 or visit [www.lti.co.uk](http://www.lti.co.uk).

